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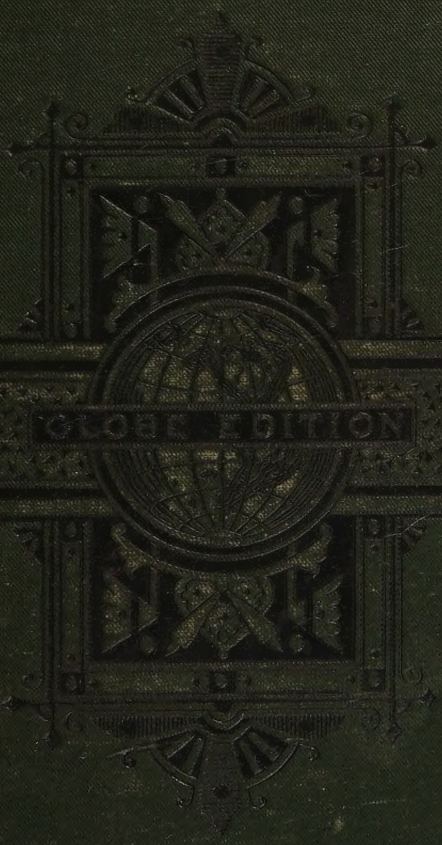

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THE WORKS

OF

J. FENIMORE COOPER.

Globe Edition.

THE SPY.— WYANDOTTÉ.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

MAJOR DUNWOODIE AND THE PEDLER.

The Spy, p. 228.

THE SPY

A TALE OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND

BY

J. FENIMORE COOPER

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?

SCOTT.

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge.
1881.

INTRODUCTION.

THE author has often been asked if there were any foundation in real life for the delineation of the principal character in this book. He can give no clearer answer to the question than by laying before his readers a simple statement of the facts connected with its original publication.

Many years since, the writer of this volume was at the residence of an illustrious man, who had been employed in various situations of high trust during the darkest days of the American Revolution. The discourse turned upon the effects which great political excitement produce on character, and the purifying consequences of a love of country, when that sentiment is powerfully and generally awakened in a people. He who, from his years, his services, and his knowledge of men, was best qualified to take the lead in such a conversation, was the principal speaker. After dwelling on the marked manner in which the great struggle of the nation, during the war of 1775, had given a new and honorable direction to the thoughts and practices of multitudes whose time had formerly been engrossed by the most vulgar concerns of life, he illustrated his opinions by relating an anecdote, the truth of which he could attest as a personal witness.

The dispute between England and the United States of America, though not strictly a family quarrel, had many of the features of a civil war. The people of the latter were never properly and constitutionally subject to the people of the former, but the inhabitants of both countries owed allegiance to a common king. The Americans, as a nation,

disavowed this allegiance, and the English choosing to support their sovereign in the attempt to regain his power, most of the feelings of an internal struggle were involved in the conflict. A large proportion of the emigrants from Europe, then established in the colonies, took part with the crown; and there were many districts in which their influence, united to that of the Americans who refused to lay aside their allegiance, gave a decided preponderance to the royal cause. America was then too young, and too much in need of every heart and hand, to regard these partial divisions, small as they were in actual amount, with indifference. The evil was greatly increased by the activity of the English in profiting by these internal dissensions; and it became doubly serious when it was found that attempts were made to raise various corps of provincial troops, who were to be banded with those from Europe, to reduce the young republic to subjection. Congress named an especial and a secret committee, therefore, for the express purpose of defeating this object. Of this committee Mr. ——, the narrator of the anecdote, was chairman.

In the discharge of the novel duties which now devolved on him, Mr. —— had occasion to employ an agent whose services differed but little from those of a common spy. This man, as will easily be understood, belonged to a condition in life which rendered him the least reluctant to appear in so equivocal a character. He was poor, ignorant, so far as the usual instruction was concerned; but cool, shrewd, and fearless by nature. It was his office to learn in what part of the country the agents of the crown were making their efforts to embody men, to repair to the place, enlist, appear zealous in the cause he affected to serve, and otherwise to get possession of as many of the secrets of the enemy as possible. The last he of course communicated to his employers, who took all the means in their power to counteract the plans of the English, and frequently with success.

It will readily be conceived that a service like this was attended with great personal hazard. In addition to the

danger of discovery, there was the daily risk of falling into the hands of the Americans themselves, who invariably visited sins of this nature more severely on the natives of the country than on the Europeans who fell into their hands. In fact, the agent of Mr. —— was several times arrested by the local authorities; and, in one instance, he was actually condemned by his exasperated countrymen to the gallows. Speedy and private orders to his jailer alone saved him from an ignominious death. He was permitted to escape; and this seeming and indeed actual peril was of great aid in supporting his assumed character among the English. By the Americans, in his little sphere, he was denounced as a bold and inveterate Tory. In this manner he continued to serve his country in secret during the early years of the struggle, hourly environed by danger, and the constant subject of unmerited opprobrium.

In the year ——, Mr. —— was named to a high and honorable employment at a European court. Before vacating his seat in Congress, he reported to that body an outline of the circumstances related, necessarily suppressing the name of his agent, and demanding an appropriation in behalf of a man who had been of so much use, at so great risk. A suitable sum was voted, and its delivery was confided to the chairman of the secret committee.

Mr. —— took the necessary means to summon his agent to a personal interview. They met in a wood, at midnight. Here Mr. —— complimented his companion on his fidelity and adroitness; explained the necessity of their communications being closed; and finally tendered the money. The other drew back, and declined receiving it. "The country has need of all its means," he said; "as for myself, I can work, or gain a livelihood in various ways." Persuasion was useless, for patriotism was uppermost in the heart of this remarkable individual; and Mr. —— departed, bearing with him the gold he had brought, and a deep respect for the man who had so long hazarded his life, unrequited, for the cause they served in common.

The writer is under an impression that, at a later day, the agent of Mr. —— consented to receive a remuneration for what he had done; but it was not until his country was entirely in a condition to bestow it.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that an anecdote like this, simply but forcibly told by one of its principal actors, made a deep impression on all who heard it. Many years later, circumstances, which it is unnecessary to relate, and of an entirely adventitious nature, induced the writer to publish a novel, which proved to be, what he little foresaw at the time, the first of a tolerably long series. The same adventitious causes which gave birth to the book, determined its scene and its general character. The former was laid in a foreign country; and the latter embraced a crude effort to describe foreign manners. When this tale was published, it became matter of reproach among the author's friends, that he, an American in heart as in birth, should give to the world a work which aided perhaps, in some slight degree, to feed the imaginations of the young and unpracticed among his own countrymen, by pictures drawn from a state of society so different from that to which he belonged. The writer, while he knew how much of what he had done was purely accidental, felt the reproach to be one that, in a measure, was just. As the only atonement in his power, he determined to inflict a second book, whose subject should admit of no cavil, not only on the world, but on himself. He chose patriotism for his theme; and to those who read this introduction and the book itself, it is scarcely necessary to add, that he took the hero of the anecdote just related as the best illustration of his subject.

Since the original publication of "The Spy," there have appeared several accounts of different persons who are supposed to have been in the author's mind while writing the book. As Mr. —— did not mention the name of his agent, the writer never knew any more of his identity with this or that individual, than has been here explained. Both Washington and Sir Henry Clinton had an unusual number of

secret emissaries; in a war that partook so much of a domestic character, and in which the contending parties were people of the same blood and language, it could scarcely be otherwise.

The style of the book has been revised by the author in this edition. In this respect, he has endeavored to make it more worthy of the favor with which it has been received; though he is compelled to admit there are faults so interwoven with the structure of the tale that, as in the case of a decayed edifice, it would cost perhaps less to reconstruct than to repair. Five-and-twenty years have been as ages with most things connected with America. Among other advances, that of her literature has not been the least. So little was expected from the publication of an original work of this description, at the time it was written, that the first volume of "The Spy" was actually printed several months, before the author felt a sufficient inducement to write a line of the second. The efforts expended on a hopeless task are rarely worthy of him who makes them, however low it may be necessary to rate the standard of his general merit.

One other anecdote connected with the history of this book may give the reader some idea of the hopes of an American author, in the first quarter of the present century. As the second volume was slowly printing, from manuscript that was barely dry when it went into the compositor's hands, the publisher intimated that the work might grow to a length that would consume the profits. To set his mind at rest, the last chapter was actually written, printed, and paged, several weeks before the chapters which precede it were even thought of. This circumstance, while it cannot excuse, may serve to explain the manner in which the actors are hurried off the scene.

A great change has come over the country since this book was originally written. The nation is passing from the gristle into the bone, and the common mind is beginning to keep even pace with the growth of the body politic. The march from Vera Cruz to Mexico was made under the

orders of that gallant soldier who, a quarter of a century before, was mentioned with honor, in the last chapter of this very book. Glorious as was that march, and brilliant as were its results in a military point of view, a stride was then made by the nation, in a moral sense, that has hastened it by an age, in its progress toward real independence and high political influence. The guns that filled the valley of the Aztecs with their thunder, have been heard in echoes on the other side of the Atlantic, producing equally hope or apprehension.

There is now no enemy to fear, but the one that resides within. By accustoming ourselves to regard even the people as erring beings, and by using the restraints that wisdom has adduced from experience, there is much reason to hope that the same Providence which has so well aided us in our infancy, may continue to smile on our manhood.

COOPERSTOWN, *March* 29, 1849.

THE SPY.

CHAPTER I.

And though amidst the calm of thought entire,
Some high and haughty features might betray
A soul impetuous once — 'twas earthly fire
That fled composure's intellectual ray,
As Etna's fires grow dim before the rising day.
GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

It was near the close of the year 1780, that a solitary traveller was seen pursuing his way through one of the numerous little valleys of West-Chester.[1] The easterly wind, with its chilling dampness and increasing violence, gave unerring notice of the approach of a storm, which, as usual, might be expected to continue for several days: and the experienced eye of the traveller was turned in vain, through the darkness of the evening, in quest of some convenient shelter, in which, for the term of his confinement by the rain that already began to mix with the atmosphere in a thick mist, he might obtain such accommodations as his purposes required. Nothing however offered but the small and inconvenient tenements of the lower order of the inhabitants, with whom, in that immediate neighborhood, he did not think it either safe or politic to trust himself.

The county of West-Chester, after the British had obtained possession of the island of New York,[2] became com-

1 As each State of the American Union has its own counties, it often happens that there are several which bear the same name. The scene of this tale is in New York, whose county of West-Chester is the nearest adjoining to the city.

2 The city of New York is situate on an island called Manhattan: but it is at one point, separated from the county of West-Chester by a creek of only

mon ground, in which both parties continued to act for the remainder of the war of the Revolution. A large proportion of its inhabitants, either restrained by their attachments, or influenced by their fears, affected a neutrality they did not feel. The lower towns were, of course, more particularly under the dominion of the crown, while the upper, finding a security from the vicinity of the continental troops, were bold in asserting their revolutionary opinions, and their right to govern themselves. Great numbers, however, wore masks, which even to this day have not been thrown aside; and many an individual has gone down to the tomb, stigmatized as a foe to the rights of his countrymen, while, in secret, he has been the useful agent of the leaders of the Revolution; and, on the other hand, could the hidden repositories of divers flaming patriots have been opened to the light of day, royal protections would have been discovered concealed under piles of British gold.

At the sound of the tread of the noble horse ridden by the traveller, the mistress of the farm-house he was passing at the time might be seen cautiously opening the door of the building to examine the stranger; and perhaps, with an averted face, communicating the result of her observations to her husband, who, in the rear of the building, was prepared to seek, if necessary, his ordinary place of concealment in the adjacent woods. The valley was situated about midway in the length of the county, and was sufficiently near to both armies to make the restitution of stolen goods no uncommon occurrence in that vicinity. It is true, the same articles were not always regained; but a summary substitute was generally resorted to, in the absence of legal justice, which restored to the loser the amount of his loss, and frequently with no inconsiderable addition for the temporary use of his property. In short, the law was momentarily extinct in that particular district, and justice was

a few feet in width. The bridge at this spot is called King's Bridge. It was the scene of many skirmishes during the war, and is alluded to in this tale. Every Manhattanese knows the difference between "Manhattan Island" and "the island of Manhattan." The first is applied to a small district in the vicinity of Corlaer's Hook, while the last embraces the whole island; or the city and county of New York, as it is termed in the laws.

administered subject to the bias of personal interests and the passions of the strongest.

The passage of a stranger, with an appearance of somewhat doubtful character, and mounted on an animal which, although unfurnished with any of the ordinary trappings of war, partook largely of the bold and upright carriage that distinguished his rider, gave rise to many surmises among the gazing inmates of the different habitations; and in some instances, where conscience was more than ordinarily awake, to no little alarm.

Tired with the exercise of a day of unusual fatigue, and anxious to obtain a speedy shelter from the increasing violence of the storm, that now began to change its character to large drops of driving rain, the traveller determined, as a matter of necessity, to make an application for admission to the next dwelling that offered. An opportunity was not long wanting; and, riding through a pair of neglected bars, he knocked loudly at the outer door of a building of a very humble exterior, without quitting his saddle. A female of middle age, with an outward bearing but little more prepossessing than that of her dwelling, appeared to answer the summons. The startled woman half closed her door again in affright, as she saw, by the glare of a large wood fire, a mounted man so unexpectedly near its threshold; and an expression of terror mingled with her natural curiosity, as she required his pleasure.

Although the door was too nearly closed to admit of a minute scrutiny of the accommodations within, enough had been seen to cause the horseman to endeavor, once more, to penetrate the gloom, with longing eyes, in search of a more promising roof, before, with an ill-concealed reluctance, he stated his necessities and wishes. His request was listened to with evident unwillingness, and, while yet unfinished, it was eagerly interrupted by the reply: —

"I can't say I like to give lodgings to a stranger in these ticklish times," said the female, in a pert, sharp key; "I'm nothing but a forlorn lone body; or, what's the same thing, there's nobody but the old gentleman at home; but a half mile farther up the road is a house where you can get en-

tertainment, and that for nothing. I am sure 'twill be much convenienter to them, and more agreeable to me — because, as I said before, Harvey is away; I wish he'd take advice, and leave off wandering; he's well to do in the world, by this time; and he ought to leave off his uncertain courses, and settle himself, handsomely, in life, like other men of his years and property. But Harvey Birch will have his own way, and die vagabond after all!"

The horseman did not wait to hear more than the advice to pursue his course up the road; but he had slowly turned his horse towards the bars, and was gathering the folds of an ample cloak around his manly form, preparatory to facing the storm again, when something in the speech of the female suddenly arrested the movement.

"Is this, then, the dwelling of Harvey Birch?" he inquired, in an involuntary manner, apparently checking himself, as he was about to utter more.

"Why, one can hardly say it is his dwelling," replied the other, drawing a hurried breath, like one eager to answer; "he is never in it, or so seldom, that I hardly remember his face, when he does think it worth his while to show it to his poor old father and me. But it matters little to me, I'm sure, if he ever comes back again, or not; — turn in the first gate on your left; — no, I care but little, for my part, whether Harvey ever shows his face again or not — not I" — and she closed the door abruptly on the horseman, who gladly extended his ride a half mile farther, to obtain lodgings which promised both more comfort and greater security.

Sufficient light yet remained to enable the traveller to distinguish the improvements[1] which had been made in the cultivation, and in the general appearance of the grounds around the building to which he was now approaching. The house was of stone, long, low, and with a small wing at each extremity. A piazza, extending along the front, with neatly turned pillars of wood, together with the good order

[1] Improvements is used by the Americans to express every degree of change in converting land from its state of wilderness to that of cultivation. In this meaning of the word, it is an improvement to fell the trees; and it is valued precisely by the supposed amount of the cost.

and preservation of the fences and out-buildings, gave the place an air altogether superior to the common farm-houses of the country. After leading his horse behind an angle of the wall, where it was in some degree protected from the wind and rain, the traveller threw his valise over his arm, and knocked loudly at the entrance of the building for admission. An aged black soon appeared; and without seeming to think it necessary, under the circumstances, to consult his superiors, — first taking one prying look at the applicant, by the light of the candle in his hand, — he acceded to the request for accommodations. The traveller was shown into an extremely neat parlor, where a fire had been lighted to cheer the dullness of an easterly storm and an October evening. After giving the valise into the keeping of his civil attendant, and politely repeating his request to the old gentleman, who arose to receive him, and paying his compliments to the three ladies who were seated at work with their needles, the stranger commenced laying aside some of the outer garments which he had worn in his ride.

On taking an extra handkerchief from his neck, and removing a cloak of blue cloth, with a surtout of the same material, he exhibited to the scrutiny of the observant family party, a tall and extremely graceful person, of apparently fifty years of age. His countenance evinced a settled composure and dignity; his nose was straight, and approaching to Grecian; his eye, of a gray color, was quiet, thoughtful, and rather melancholy; the mouth and lower part of his face being expressive of decision and much character. His dress, being suited to the road, was simple and plain, but such as was worn by the higher class of his countrymen; he wore his own hair, dressed in a manner that gave a military air to his appearance, and which was rather heightened by his erect and conspicuously graceful carriage. His whole appearance was so impressive and so decidedly that of a gentleman, that as he finished laying aside the garments, the ladies arose from their seats, and, together with the master of the house, they received anew, and returned the complimentary greetings which were again offered.

The host was by several years the senior of the travel-

ler, and by his manner, dress, and everything around him, showed he had seen much of life and the best society. The ladies were, a maiden of forty, and two much younger, who did not seem, indeed, to have reached half those years. The bloom of the elder of these ladies had vanished, but her eyes and fine hair gave an extremely agreeable expression to her countenance; and there was a softness and an affability in her deportment, that added a charm many more juvenile faces do not possess. The sisters, for such the resemblance between the younger females denoted them to be, were in all the pride of youth, and the roses, so eminently the property of the West-Chester fair, glowed on their cheeks, and lighted their deep blue eyes with that lustre which gives so much pleasure to the beholder, and which indicates so much internal innocence and peace. There was much of that feminine delicacy in the appearance of the three, which distinguishes the sex in this country; and, like the gentleman, their demeanor proved them to be women of the higher order of life.

After handing a glass of excellent Madeira to his guest, Mr. Wharton, for so was the owner of this retired estate called, resumed his seat by the fire, with another in his own hand. For a moment he paused, as if debating with his politeness, but at length threw an inquiring glance on the stranger, as he inquired, —

"To whose health am I to have the honor of drinking?"

The traveller had also seated himself, and he sat unconsciously gazing on the fire, while Mr. Wharton spoke; turning his eyes slowly on his host with a look of close observation, he replied, while a faint tinge gathered on his features, —

"Mr. Harper."

"Mr. Harper," resumed the other, with the formal precision of that day, "I have the honor to drink your health, and to hope you will sustain no injury from the rain to which you have been exposed."

Mr. Harper bowed in silence to the compliment, and he soon resumed the meditations from which he had been

interrupted, and for which the long ride he had that day made, in the wind, might seem a very natural apology.

The young ladies had again taken their seats beside the workstand, while their aunt, Miss Jeanette Peyton, withdrew to superintend the preparations necessary to appease the hunger of their unexpected visitor. A short silence prevailed, during which Mr. Harper was apparently enjoying the change in his situation, when Mr. Wharton again broke it, by inquiring whether smoke was disagreeable to his companion; to which, receiving an answer in the negative, he immediately resumed the pipe which had been laid aside at the entrance of the traveller.

There was an evident desire on the part of the host to enter into conversation, but either from an apprehension of treading on dangerous ground, or an unwillingness to intrude upon the rather studied taciturnity of his guest, he several times hesitated, before he could venture to make any further remark. At length, a movement from Mr. Harper, as he raised his eyes to the party in the room, encouraged him to proceed.

"I find it very difficult," said Mr. Wharton, cautiously avoiding, at first, such subjects as he wished to introduce, "to procure that quality of tobacco for my evenings' amusement, to which I have been accustomed."

"I should think the shops in New York might furnish the best in the country," calmly rejoined the other.

"Why — yes," returned the host in rather a hesitating manner, lifting his eyes to the face of Harper, and lowering them quickly under his steady look, "there must be plenty in town; but the war has made communication with the city, however innocent, too dangerous to be risked for so trifling an article as tobacco."

The box from which Mr. Wharton had just taken a supply for his pipe was lying open, within a few inches of the elbow of Harper, who took a small quantity from its contents, and applied it to his tongue, in a manner perfectly natural, but one that filled his companion with alarm. Without, however, observing that the quality was of the most approved kind, the traveller relieved his

host by relapsing again into his meditations. Mr. Wharton now felt unwilling to lose the advantage he had gained, and, making an effort of more than usual vigor, he continued, —

"I wish, from the bottom of my heart, this unnatural struggle was over, that we might again meet our friends and relatives in peace and love."

"It is much to be desired," said Harper, emphatically, again raising his eyes to the countenance of his host.

"I hear of no movement of consequence, since the arrival of our new allies," said Mr. Wharton, shaking the ashes from his pipe, and turning his back to the other, under the pretense of receiving a coal from his youngest daughter.

"None have yet reached the public, I believe."

"Is it thought any important steps are about to be taken?" continued Mr. Wharton, still occupied with his daughter, yet unconsciously suspending his employment, in expectation of a reply.

"Is it intimated any are in agitation?"

"Oh! nothing in particular; but it is natural to expect some new enterprise from so powerful a force as that under Rochambeau."

Harper made an assenting inclination with his head, but no other reply, to this remark; while Mr. Wharton, after lighting his pipe, resumed the subject.

"They appear more active in the south; Gates and Cornwallis seem willing to bring the war to an issue there."

The brow of Harper contracted, and a deeper shade of melancholy crossed his features; his eye kindled with a transient beam of fire, that spoke a latent source of deep feeling. The admiring gaze of the younger of the sisters had barely time to read its expression, before it passed away, leaving in its room the acquired composure which marked the countenance of the stranger, and that impressive dignity which so conspicuously denotes the empire of reason.

The elder sister made one or two movements in her

chair. before she ventured to say, in a tone which partook in no small measure of triumph, —

"General Gates has been less fortunate with the earl, than with General Burgoyne."

"But General Gates is an Englishman, Sarah," cried the younger lady, with quickness; then, coloring to the eyes at her own boldness, she employed herself in tumbling over the contents of her work-basket, silently hoping the remark would be unnoticed.

The traveller had turned his face from one sister to the other, as they had spoken in succession, and an almost imperceptible movement of the muscles of his mouth betrayed a new emotion, as he playfully inquired of the younger, —

"May I venture to ask what inference you would draw from that fact?"

Frances blushed yet deeper at this direct appeal to her opinions upon a subject on which she had incautiously spoken in the presence of a stranger; but finding an answer necessary, after some little hesitation, and with a good deal of stammering in her manner, she replied, —

"Only — only — sir — my sister and myself sometimes differ in our opinions of the prowess of the British." A smile of much meaning played on a face of infantile innocency, as she concluded.

"On what particular points of their prowess do you differ?" continued Harper, meeting her look of animation with a smile of almost paternal softness.

"Sarah thinks the British are never beaten, while I do not put so much faith in their invincibility."

The traveller listened to her with that pleased indulgence, with which virtuous age loves to contemplate the ardor of youthful innocence; but making no reply, he turned to the fire, and continued for some time gazing on its embers, in silence.

Mr. Wharton had in vain endeavored to pierce the disguise of his guest's political feelings; but, while there was nothing forbidding in his countenance, there was nothing communicative; on the contrary it was strikingly

reserved; and the master of the house arose, in profound ignorance of what, in those days, was the most material point in the character of his guest, to lead the way into another room, and to the supper table. Mr. Harper offered his hand to Sarah Wharton, and they entered the room together; while Frances followed, greatly at a loss to know whether she had not wounded the feelings of her father's inmate.

The storm began to rage with great violence without; and the dashing rain on the sides of the building awakened that silent sense of enjoyment, which is excited by such sounds in a room of quiet comfort and warmth, when a loud summons at the outer door again called the faithful black to the portal. In a minute the servant returned, and informed his master that another traveller, overtaken by the storm, desired to be admitted to the house for a shelter through the night.

At the first sounds of the impatient summons of this new applicant, Mr. Wharton had risen from his seat in evident uneasiness; and with eyes glancing with quickness from his guest to the door of the room, he seemed to be expecting something to proceed from this second interruption, connected with the stranger who had occasioned the first. He scarcely had time to bid the black, with a faint voice, to show this second comer in, before the door was thrown hastily open, and the stranger himself entered the apartment. He paused a moment, as the person of Harper met his view, and then, in a more formal manner, repeated the request he had before made through the servant. Mr. Wharton and his family disliked the appearance of this new visitor excessively; but the inclemency of the weather, and the uncertainty of the consequences, if he were refused the desired lodgings, compelled the old gentleman to give a reluctant acquiescence.

Some of the dishes were replaced by the orders of Miss Peyton, and the weather-beaten intruder was invited to partake of the remains of the repast, from which the party had just risen. Throwing aside a rough great-coat, he very composedly took the offered chair, and unceremoniously

proceeded to allay the cravings of an appetite which appeared by no means delicate. But at every mouthful he would turn an unquiet eye on Harper, who studied his appearance with a closeness of investigation that was very embarrassing to its subject. At length, pouring out a glass of wine, the new-comer nodded significantly to his examiner, previously to swallowing the liquor, and said, with something of bitterness in his manner, —

"I drink to our better acquaintance, sir; I believe this is the first time we have met, though your attention would seem to say otherwise."

The quality of the wine seemed greatly to his fancy, for, on replacing the glass upon the table, he gave his lips a smack, that resounded through the room; and, taking up the bottle, he held it between himself and the light, for a moment, in silent contemplation of its clear and brilliant color.

"I think we have never met before, sir," replied Harper with a slight smile on his features, as he observed the movements of the other; but appearing satisfied with his scrutiny, he turned to Sarah Wharton, who sat next him, and carelessly remarked, —

"You doubtless find your present abode solitary, after being accustomed to the gayeties of the city."

"Oh! excessively so," said Sarah hastily. "I do wish, with my father, that this cruel war was at an end, that we might return to our friends once more."

"And you, Miss Frances, do you long as ardently for peace as your sister?"

"On many accounts I certainly do," returned the other, venturing to steal a timid glance at her interrogator; and, meeting the same benevolent expression of feeling as before, she continued, as her own face lighted into one of its animated and bright smiles of intelligence, "but not at the expense of the rights of my countrymen."

"Rights!" repeated her sister, impatiently; "whose rights can be stronger than those of a sovereign: and what duty is clearer, than to obey those who have a natural right to command?"

"None, certainly," said Frances, laughing with great pleasantry; and, taking the hand of her sister affectionately within both of her own, she added, with a smile directed towards Harper, —

"I gave you to understand that my sister and myself differed in our political opinions; but we have an impartial umpire in my father, who loves his own countrymen, and he loves the British, — so he takes sides with neither."

"Yes," said Mr. Wharton, in a little alarm, eying first one guest, and then the other; "I have near friends in both armies, and I dread a victory by either, as a source of certain private misfortune."

"I take it, you have little reason to apprehend much from the Yankees, in that way," interrupted the guest at the table, coolly helping himself to another glass, from the bottle he had admired.

"His Majesty may have more experienced troops than the continentals," answered the host fearfully, "but the Americans have met with distinguished success."

Harper disregarded the observations of both; and, rising, he desired to be shown to his place of rest. A small boy was directed to guide him to his room; and wishing a courteous good night to the whole party, the traveller withdrew. The knife and fork fell from the hands of the unwelcome intruder, as the door closed on the retiring figure of Harper; he arose slowly from his seat; listening attentively, he approached the door of the room — opened it — seemed to attend to the retreating footsteps of the other — and, amidst the panic and astonishment of his companions, he closed it again. In an instant, the red wig which concealed his black locks, the large patch which hid half his face from observation, the stoop that had made him appear fifty years of age, disappeared.

"My father! — my dear father!" — cried the handsome young man; "and you, my dearest sisters and aunt! — have I at last met you again?"

"Heaven bless you, my Henry, my son!" exclaimed the astonished but delighted parent; while his sisters sunk on his shoulders, dissolved in tears.

The faithful old black, who had been reared from infancy in the house of his master, and who, as if in mockery of his degraded state, had been complimented with the name of Cæsar, was the only other witness of this unexpected discovery of the son of Mr. Wharton. After receiving the extended hand of his young master, and imprinting on it a fervent kiss, Cæsar withdrew. The boy did not reënter the room; and the black himself, after some time, returned, just as the young British captain was exclaiming, —

"But who is this Mr. Harper? — is he likely to betray me?"

"No, no, no, Massa Harry," cried the negro, shaking his gray head confidently; "I been to see — Massa Harper on he knee — pray to God — no gemman who pray to God tell of good son, come to see old fader — Skinner do that — no Christian!"

This poor opinion of the Skinners was not confined to Mr. Cæsar Thompson, as he called himself — but Cæsar Wharton, as he was styled by the little world to which he was known. The convenience, and perhaps the necessities, of the leaders of the American arms, in the neighborhood of New York, had induced them to employ certain subordinate agents, of extremely irregular habits, in executing their lesser plans of annoying the enemy. It was not a moment for fastidious inquiries into abuses of any description, and oppression and injustice were the natural consequences of the possession of a military power that was uncurbed by the restraints of civil authority. In time, a distinct order of the community was formed, whose sole occupation appears to have been that of relieving their fellow-citizens from any little excess of temporal prosperity they might be thought to enjoy, under the pretense of patriotism, and the love of liberty.

Occasionally, the aid of military authority was not wanting, in enforcing these arbitrary distributions of worldly goods; and a petty holder of a commission in the State militia was to be seen giving the sanction of something like legality to acts of the most unlicensed robbery, and, not unfrequently, of bloodshed.

On the part of the British, the stimulus of loyalty was

by no means suffered to sleep, where so fruitful a field offered, on which it might be expended. But their freebooters were enrolled, and their efforts more systematized. Long experience had taught their leaders the efficacy of concentrated force; and, unless tradition does great injustice to their exploits, the result did no little credit to their foresight. The corps — we presume, from their known affection to that useful animal — had received the quaint appellation of "Cow-Boys."

Cæsar was, however, far too loyal to associate men who held the commission of George III., with the irregular warriors, whose excesses he had so often witnessed, and from whose rapacity, neither his poverty nor his bondage had suffered even him to escape uninjured. The Cow-Boys, therefore, did not receive their proper portion of the black's censure, when he said, no Christian, nothing but a "Skinner," could betray a pious child, while honoring his father with a visit so full of peril.

CHAPTER II.

And many a halcyon day he lived to see
Unbroken, but by one misfortune dire,
When fate had reft his mutual heart — but she
Was gone — and Gertrude climbed a widowed father's knee.
GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

THE father of Mr. Wharton was a native of England, and of a family whose parliamentary interest had enabled them to provide for a younger son in the colony of New York. The young man, like hundreds of others in his situation, had settled permanently in the country. He married; and the sole issue of his connection had been sent early in life to receive the benefits of the English schools. After taking his degrees at one of the universities of the mother country, the youth had been suffered to acquire a knowledge of life with the advantages of European society. But the death of his father recalled him, after passing two years in this manner, to the possession of an honorable name, and a very ample estate.

It was much the fashion of that day to place the youth of certain families in the army or navy of England, as the regular stepping-stones to preferment. Most of the higher offices in the colonies were filled by men who had made arms their profession; and it was even no uncommon sight to see a veteran warrior laying aside the sword to assume the ermine on the benches of the highest judicial authority.

In conformity with this system, the senior Mr. Wharton had intended his son for a soldier; but a natural imbecility of character in his child interfered with his wishes.

A twelvemonth had been spent by the young man in weighing the comparative advantages of the different classes of troops, when the death of his father occurred. The ease of his situation, and the attentions lavished upon a

youth in the actual enjoyment of one of the largest estates in the colonies, interfered greatly with his ambitious projects. Love decided the matter; and Mr. Wharton, in becoming a husband, ceased to think of becoming a soldier. For many years he continued happy in his family, and sufficiently respected by his countrymen, as a man of integrity and consequence, when all his enjoyments vanished, as it were, at a blow. His only son, the youth introduced in the preceding chapter, had entered the army, and had arrived in his native country, but a short time before the commencement of hostilities, with the reinforcements the ministry had thought it prudent to throw into the disaffected parts of North America. His daughters were just growing into life, and their education required all the advantages the city could afford. His wife had been for some years in declining health, and had barely time to fold her son to her bosom, and rejoice in the reunion of her family, before the Revolution burst forth, in a continued blaze, from Georgia to Massachusetts. The shock was too much for the feeble condition of the mother, who saw her child called to the field to combat against the members of her own family in the South, and she sunk under the blow.

There was no part of the continent where the manners of England, and its aristocratical notions of blood and alliances, prevailed with more force than in a certain circle immediately around the metropolis of New York. The customs of the early Dutch inhabitants had, indeed, blended in some measure with the English manners; but still the latter prevailed. This attachment to Great Britain was increased by the frequent intermarriages of the officers of the mother-country with the wealthier and most powerful families of the vicinity, until, at the commencement of hostilities, their united influence had very nearly thrown the colony into the scale on the side of the crown. A few, however, of the leading families espoused the cause of the people; and a sufficient stand was made against the efforts of the ministerial party, to organize, and, aided by the army of the confederation, to maintain, an independent and republican form of government.

The city of New York and the adjacent territory were alone exempted from the rule of the new commonwealth; while the royal authority extended no farther than its dignity could be supported by the presence of an army. In this condition of things, the loyalists of influence adopted such measures as best accorded with their different characters and situations. Many bore arms in support of the crown, and, by their bravery and exertions, endeavored to secure what they deemed to be the rights of their prince, and their own estates from the effects of the law of attainder. Others left the country; seeking in that place they emphatically called home, an asylum, as they fondly hoped, for a season only, against the confusion and dangers of war. A third, and a more wary portion, remained in the place of their nativity, with a prudent regard to their ample possessions, and, perhaps, influenced by their attachments to the scenes of their youth. Mr. Wharton was of this description. After making a provision against future contingencies, by secretly transmitting the whole of his money to the British funds, this gentleman determined to continue in the theatre of strife, and to maintain so strict a neutrality as to insure the safety of his large estate, whichever party succeeded. He was apparently engrossed in the education of his daughters, when a relation, high in office in the new State, intimated that a residence in what was now a British camp differed but little, in the eyes of his countrymen, from a residence in the British capital. Mr. Wharton soon saw this was an unpardonable offense in the existing state of things, and he instantly determined to remove the difficulty, by retiring to the country. He possessed a residence in the county of West-Chester; and having been for many years in the habit of withdrawing thither during the heats of the summer months, it was kept furnished, and ready for his accommodation. His eldest daughter was already admitted into the society of women; but Frances, the younger, required a year or two more of the usual cultivation, to appear with proper *éclat;* at least so thought Miss Jeanette Peyton; and as this lady, a younger sister of their deceased mother, had left her paternal home, in the colony

of Virginia, with the devotedness and affection peculiar to her sex, to superintend the welfare of her orphan nieces, Mr. Wharton felt that her opinions were entitled to respect. In conformity to her advice, therefore, the feelings of the parent were made to yield to the welfare of his children.

Mr. Wharton withdrew to the Locusts, with a heart rent with the pain of separating from all that was left him of a wife he had adored, but in obedience to a constitutional prudence that pleaded loudly in behalf of his worldly goods. His handsome town residence was inhabited, in the mean while, by his daughters and their aunt. The regiment to which Captain Wharton belonged formed part of the permanent garrison of the city; and the knowledge of the presence of his son was no little relief to the father, in his unceasing meditations on his absent daughters. But Captain Wharton was a young man and a soldier; his estimate of character was not always the wisest; and his propensities led him to imagine that a red coat never concealed a dishonorable heart.

The house of Mr. Wharton became a fashionable lounge to the officers of the royal army, as did that of every other family that was thought worthy of their notice. The consequences of this association were, to some few of the visited, fortunate; to more, injurious, by exciting expectations which were never to be realized, and, unhappily, to no small number ruinous. The known wealth of the father and, possibly, the presence of a high-spirited brother, forbade any apprehension of the latter danger to the young ladies: but it was impossible that all the admiration bestowed on the fine figure and lovely face of Sarah Wharton should be thrown away. Her person was formed with the early maturity of the climate, and a strict cultivation of the graces had made her decidedly the belle of the city. No one promised to dispute with her this female sovereignty, unless it might be her younger sister. Frances, however, wanted some months to the charmed age of sixteen; and the idea of competition was far from the minds of either of the affectionate girls. Indeed, next to the conversation of Colonel Wellmere, the greatest pleasure of

Sarah was in contemplating the budding beauties of the little Hebe, who played around her with all the innocency of youth, with all the enthusiasm of her ardent temper, and with no little of the archness of her native humor. Whether or not it was owing to the fact that Frances received none of the compliments which fell to the lot of her elder sister, in the often repeated discussions on the merits of the war, between the military beaux who frequented the house, it is certain their effects on the sisters were exactly opposite. It was much the fashion then for the British officers to speak slightingly of their enemies; and Sarah took all the idle vaporing of her danglers to be truths. The first political opinions which reached the ears of Frances were coupled with sneers on the conduct of her countrymen. At first she believed them; but there was occasionally a general, who was obliged to do justice to his enemy in order to obtain justice for himself; and Frances became somewhat skeptical on the subject of the inefficiency of her countrymen. Colonel Wellmere was among those who delighted most in expending his wit on the unfortunate Americans; and, in time, Frances began to listen to his eloquence with great suspicion, and sometimes with resentment.

It was on a hot, sultry day, that the three were in the parlor of Mr. Wharton's house, the colonel and Sarah seated on a sofa, engaged in a combat of the eyes, aided by the usual flow of small talk, and Frances was occupied at her tambouring frame, in an opposite corner of the room, when the gentleman suddenly exclaimed, —

"How gay the arrival of the army under General Burgoyne will make the city, Miss Wharton!"

"Oh! how pleasant it must be," said the thoughtless Sarah, in reply; "I am told there are many charming women with that army; as you say, it will make us all life and gayety."

Frances shook back the abundance of her golden hair, and raised her eyes, dancing with the ardor of national feeling; then laughing, with a concealed humor, she asked, —

"Is it so certain that General Burgoyne will be permitted to reach the city?"

"Permitted!" echoed the colonel, "who is there to prevent it, my pretty Miss Fanny?"

Frances was precisely at that age when young people are most jealous of their station in society; neither quite a woman, nor yet a child. The "pretty Miss Fanny" was too familiar to be relished, and she dropped her eyes on her work again, with cheeks that glowed like crimson.

"General Stark took the Germans into custody," she answered, compressing her lip; "may not General Gates think the British too dangerous to go at large?"

"Oh! they were Germans, as you say," cried the colonel, excessively vexed at the necessity of explaining at all; "mere mercenary troops; but when the really British regiments come in question, you will see a very different result."

"Of that there is no doubt," cried Sarah, without in the least partaking of the resentment of the colonel to her sister, but hailing already in her heart the triumph of the British.

"Pray, Colonel Wellmere," said Frances, recovering her good-humor, and raising her joyous eyes once more to the face of the gentleman, "was the Lord Percy of Lexington a kinsman of him who fought at Chevy Chace?"

"Why, Miss Fanny, you are becoming a rebel," said the colonel, endeavoring to laugh away the anger he felt; "what you are pleased to insinuate was a chase at Lexington, was nothing more than a judicious retreat — a — kind of" —

"Running fight," interrupted the good-humored girl, laying great emphasis on the first word.

"Positively, young lady" — Colonel Wellmere was interrupted by a laugh from a person who had hitherto been unnoticed.

There was a small family apartment adjoining the room occupied by the trio, and the air had blown open the door communicating between the two. A fine young man was now seen sitting near the entrance, who, by his smiling countenance, was evidently a pleased listener to the conversation. He rose instantly, and coming through the door, with his hat in his hand, appeared a tall, graceful youth, of dark complexion, and sparkling eyes of black, from which the mirth

had not yet entirely vanished, as he made his bow to the ladies.

"Mr. Dunwoodie!" cried Sarah, in surprise; "I was ignorant of your being in the house; you will find a cooler seat in this room."

"I thank you," replied the young man, "but I must go and seek your brother, who placed me there in ambuscade, as he called it, with a promise of returning an hour ago." Without making any further explanation, the youth bowed politely to the young women, distantly and with hauteur to the gentleman, and withdrew. Frances followed him into the hall, and blushing richly, inquired, in a hurried voice, —

"But why — why do you leave us, Mr. Dunwoodie? Henry must soon return."

The gentleman caught one of her hands in his own, and the stern expression of his countenance gave place to a look of admiration as he replied, —

"You managed him famously, my dear little kinswoman; never — no, never, forget the land of your birth; remember, if you are the granddaughter of an Englishman, you are, also, the granddaughter of a Peyton."

"Oh!" returned the laughing girl, "it would be difficult to forget that, with the constant lectures on genealogy before us, with which we are favored by aunt Jeanette; but why do you go?"

"I am on the wing for Virginia, and have much to do." He pressed her hand as he spoke, and looking back, while in the act of closing the door, exclaimed, "Be true to your country — be American." The ardent girl kissed her hand to him as he retired, and then instantly applying it with its beautiful fellow to her burning cheeks, ran into her own apartment to hide her confusion.

Between the open sarcasm of Frances, and the ill-concealed disdain of the young man, Colonel Wellmere had felt himself placed in an awkward predicament; but ashamed to resent such trifles in the presence of his mistress, he satisfied himself with observing, superciliously, as Dunwoodie left the room, —

"Quite a liberty for a youth in his situation; a shop-boy with a bundle, I fancy."

The idea of picturing the graceful Peyton Dunwoodie as a shop-boy could never enter the mind of Sarah, and she looked around her in surprise, when the colonel continued, —

"This Mr. Dun—Dun—"

"Dunwoodie! Oh no — he is a relation of my aunt," cried the young lady, "and an intimate friend of my brother; they were at school together, and only separated in England, when one went into the army, and the other to a French military academy."

"His money appears to have been thrown away," observed the colonel, betraying the spleen he was unsuccessfully striving to conceal.

"We ought to hope so," added Sarah, with a smile, "for it is said he intends joining the rebel army. He was brought in here in a French ship, and has just been exchanged; you may soon meet him in arms."

"Well, let him — I wish Washington plenty of such heroes;" and he turned to a more pleasant subject, by changing the discourse to themselves.

A few weeks after this scene occurred, the army of Burgoyne laid down their arms. Mr. Wharton, beginning to think the result of the contest doubtful, resolved to conciliate his countrymen, and gratify himself, by calling his daughters into his own abode. Miss Peyton consented to be their companion; and from that time, until the period at which we commenced our narrative, they had formed one family.

Whenever the main army made any movements, Captain Wharton had, of course, accompanied it; and once or twice, under the protection of strong parties, acting in the neighborhood of the Locusts, he had enjoyed rapid and stolen interviews with his friends. A twelvemonth had, however, passed without his seeing them; and the impatient Henry had adopted the disguise we have mentioned, and unfortunately arrived on the very evening that an unknown and rather suspicious guest was an inmate of the house, which seldom contained any other than its regular inhabitants.

"But do you think he suspects me?" asked the captain, with anxiety, after pausing to listen to Cæsar's opinion of the Skinners.

"How should he?" cried Sarah, "when your sisters and father could not penetrate your disguise."

'There is something mysterious in his manner; his looks are too prying for an indifferent observer," continued young Wharton thoughtfully, "and his face seems familiar to me. The recent fate of André has created much irritation on both sides. Sir Henry threatens retaliation for his death; and Washington is as firm as if half the world were at his command. The rebels would think me a fit subject for their plans just now, should I be so unlucky as to fall into their hands."

"But, my son," cried his father, in great alarm, "you are not a spy; you are not within the rebel — that is, the American lines; there is nothing here to spy."

"That might be disputed," rejoined the young man, musing; "their pickets were as low as the White Plains when I passed through in disguise. It is true my purposes are innocent; but how is it to appear? My visit to you would seem a cloak to other designs. Remember, sir, the treatment you received not a year since, for sending me a supply of fruit for the winter."

"That proceeded from the misrepresentations of my kind neighbors," said Mr. Wharton, "who hoped, by getting my estate confiscated, to purchase good farms at low prices. Peyton Dunwoodie, however, soon obtained our discharge; we were detained but a month."

"We!" repeated the son, in amazement; "did they take my sisters, also? Fanny, you wrote me nothing of this."

"I believe," said Frances, coloring highly, "I mentioned the kind treatment we received from your old friend, Major Dunwoodie; and that he procured my father's release."

"True; but were you with him in the rebel camp?"

"Yes," said the father, kindly; "Fanny would not suffer me to go alone. Jeanette and Sarah took charge of the Locusts, and this little girl was my companion, in captivity."

"And Fanny returned from such a scene a greater

rebel than ever," cried Sarah, indignantly; "one would think the hardships her father suffered would have cured her of such whims."

"What say you to the charge, my pretty sister?" cried the captain gayly; "did Peyton strive to make you hate your king, more than he does himself?"

"Peyton Dunwoodie hates no one," said Frances, quickly; then, blushing at her own ardor, she added immediately, "he loves you, Henry, I know; for he has told me so again and again."

Young Wharton tapped his sister on the cheek, with a smile, as he asked her, in an affected whisper, "Did he tell you also that he loved my little sister Fanny?"

"Nonsense!" said Frances; and the remnants of the supper-table soon disappeared under her superintendence.

CHAPTER III.

'Twas when the fields were swept of Autumn's store,
And growling winds the fading foliage tore,
Behind the Lowmon hill, the short-lived light,
Descending slowly, ushered in the night;
When from the noisy town, with mournful look,
His lonely way the meagre pedler took.

WILSON.

A STORM below the highlands of the Hudson, if it be introduced with an easterly wind, seldom lasts less than two days. Accordingly, as the inmates of the Locusts assembled, on the following morning, around their early breakfast, the driving rain was seen to strike in nearly horizontal lines against the windows of the building, and forbade the idea of exposing either man or beast to the tempest. Harper was the last to appear: after taking a view of the state of the weather, he apologized to Mr. Wharton for the necessity that existed for his trespassing on his goodness for a longer time. To appearances, the reply was as courteous as the excuse; yet Harper wore a resignation in his deportment that was widely different from the uneasy manner of the father. Henry Wharton had resumed his disguise with a reluctance amounting to disgust, but in obedience to the commands of his parent. No communications passed between him and the stranger, after the first salutations of the morning had been paid by Harper to him, in common with the rest of the family. Frances had, indeed, thought there was something like a smile passing over the features of the traveller, when, on entering the room, he first confronted her brother; but it was confined to the eyes, seeming to want power to affect the muscles of the face, and was soon lost in the settled and benevolent expression which reigned in his counte-

nance, with a sway but seldom interrupted. The eyes of the affectionate sister were turned in anxiety, for a moment, on her brother, and glancing again on their unknown guest, met his look, as he offered her, with marked attention, one of the little civilities of the table; and the heart of the girl, which had begun to throb with violence, regained a pulsation as tempered as youth, health, and buoyant spirits could allow. While yet seated at the table, Cæsar entered, and laying a small parcel in silence by the side of his master, modestly retired behind his chair, where, placing one hand on its back, he continued in an attitude half familiar, half respectful, a listener.

"What is this, Cæsar?" inquired Mr. Wharton, turning the bundle over to examine its envelope, and eying it rather suspiciously.

"The 'baccy, sir; Harvey Birch, he got home, and he bring you a little good 'baccy from York."

"Harvey Birch!" rejoined the master with great deliberation, stealing a look at his guest. "I do not remember desiring him to purchase any tobacco for me; but as he has brought it, he must be paid for his trouble."

For an instant only, as the negro spoke, did Harper suspend his silent meal; his eye moved slowly from the servant to the master, and again all remained in impenetrable reserve.

To Sarah Wharton, this intelligence gave unexpected pleasure; rising from her seat with impatience, she bade the black show Birch into the apartment; when, suddenly recollecting herself, she turned to the traveller with an apologizing look, and added, "If Mr. Harper will excuse the presence of a pedler."

The indulgent benevolence expressed in the countenance of the stranger, as he bowed a silent acquiescence, spoke more eloquently than the nicest framed period, and the young lady repeated her order, with a confidence in its truth that removed all embarrassment.

In the deep recesses of the windows of the cottage were seats of paneled work; and the rich damask cur-

tains, that had ornamented the parlor in Queen Street,[1] had been transferred to the Locusts, and gave to the room that indescribable air of comfort, which so gratefully announces the approach of a domestic winter. Into one of these recesses Captain Wharton now threw himself, drawing the curtain before him in such a manner as to conceal most of his person from observation; while his younger sister, losing her natural frankness of manner, in an air of artificial constraint, silently took possession of the other.

Harvey Birch had been a pedler from his youth; at least so he frequently asserted, and his skill in the occupation went far to prove the truth of the declaration. He was a native of one of the eastern colonies; and, from something of superior intelligence which belonged to his father, it was thought they had known better fortunes in the land of their nativity. Harvey possessed, however, the common manners of the country, and was in no way distinguished from men of his class, but by his acuteness, and the mystery which enveloped his movements. Ten years before, they had arrived together in the vale, and, purchasing the humble dwelling at which Harper had made his unsuccessful application, continued ever since peaceful inhabitants, but little noticed and but little known. Until age and infirmities had prevented, the father devoted himself to the cultivation of the small spot of ground belonging to his purchase, while the son pursued with avidity his humble barter. Their orderly quietude had soon given them so much consideration in the neighborhood, as to induce a maiden of five-and-thirty to forget the punctilio of her sex, and to accept the office of presiding over their domestic comforts. The roses had long before vanished from the cheeks of Katy Haynes, and she had seen in succession, both her male and female ac-

1 The Americans changed the names of many towns and streets at the Revolution, as has since been done in France. Thus, in the city of New York Crown Street has become Liberty Street; King Street, Pine Street; and Queen Street, then one of the most fashionable quarters of the town, Pearl Street. Pearl Street is now chiefly occupied by the auction dealers, and the wholesale dry-goods merchants, for warehouses and counting-rooms.

quaintances forming the union so desirable to her sex, with but little or no hope left for herself, when, with views of her own, she entered the family of the Birches. Necessity is a hard master, and, for the want of a better companion, the father and son were induced to accept her services; but still Katy was not wanting in some qualities which made her a very tolerable housekeeper. On the one hand, she was neat, industrious, honest, and a good manager. On the other, she was talkative, selfish, superstitious, and inquisitive. By dint of using the latter quality with consummate industry, she had not lived in the family five years when she triumphantly declared that she had heard or rather overheard, sufficient to enable her to say what had been the former fate of her associates. Could Katy have possessed enough of divination to pronounce upon their future lot, her task would have been accomplished. From the private conversations of the parent and child, she learned that a fire had reduced them from competence to poverty, and at the same time diminished the number of their family to two. There was a tremulousness in the voice of the father, as he touched lightly on the event, which affected even the heart of Katy; but no barrier is sufficient to repel vulgar curiosity. She persevered, until a very direct intimation from Harvey, by threatening to supply her place with a female a few years younger than herself, gave her awful warning that there were bounds beyond which she was not to pass. From that period the curiosity of the housekeeper had been held in such salutary restraint, that, although no opportunity of listening was ever neglected, she had been able to add but little to her stock of knowledge. There was, however, one piece of intelligence, and that of no little interest to herself, which she had succeeded in obtaining; and from the moment of its acquisition, she directed her energies to the accomplishment of one object, aided by the double stimulus of love and avarice.

Harvey was in the frequent habit of paying mysterious visits in the depth of the night, to the fireplace of the apartment that served for both kitchen and parlor. Here he

was observed by Katy; and availing herself of his absence, and the occupations of the father, by removing one of the hearth-stones, she discovered an iron pot, glittering with a metal that seldom fails to soften the hardest heart. Katy succeeded in replacing the stone without discovery, and never dared to trust herself with another visit. From that moment, however, the heart of the virgin lost its obduracy; and nothing interposed between Harvey and his happiness, but his own want of observation.

The war did not interfere with the traffic of the pedler, who seized on the golden opportunity which the interruption of the regular trade afforded, and appeared absorbed in the one grand object of amassing money. For a year or two his employment was uninterrupted, and his success proportionate; but, at length, dark and threatening hints began to throw suspicion around his movements, and the civil authority thought it incumbent on them to examine narrowly into his mode of life. His imprisonments, though frequent, were not long; and his escapes from the guardians of the law easy, compared to what he endured from the persecution of the military. Still Birch survived, and still he continued his trade, though compelled to be very guarded in his movements, especially whenever he approached the northern boundaries of the county; or in other words, the neighborhood of the American lines. His visits to the Locusts had become less frequent, and his appearance at his own abode so seldom, as to draw forth from the disappointed Katy, in the fullness of her heart, the complaint we have related, in her reply to Harper. Nothing, however, seemed to interfere with the pursuits of this indefatigable trader, who, with a view to dispose of certain articles for which he could only find purchasers in the very wealthiest families of the county, had now braved the fury of the tempest, and ventured to cross the half mile between his own residence and the house of Mr. Wharton.

In a few minutes after receiving the commands of his young mistress, Cæsar reappeared, ushering into the apartment the subject of the foregoing digression. In person, the pedler was a man above the middle height, spare, but

full of bone and muscle. At first sight, his strength seemed unequal to manage the unwieldy burden of his pack; yet he threw it on and off with great dexterity, and with as much apparent ease as if it had been filled with feathers. His eyes were gray, sunken, restless, and, for the flitting moments that they dwelt on the countenances of those with whom he conversed, they seemed to read the very soul. They possessed, however, two distinct expressions, which, in a great measure, characterized the whole man. When engaged in traffic, the intelligence of his face appeared lively, active, and flexible, though uncommonly acute; if the conversation turned on the ordinary transactions of life, his air became abstracted and restless; but if, by chance, the Revolution and the country were the topic, his whole system seemed altered — all his faculties were concentrated: he would listen for a great length of time, without speaking, and then would break silence by some light and jocular remark, that was too much at variance with his former manner, not to be affectation. But of the war, and of his father, he seldom spoke, and always from some very obvious necessity.

To a superficial observer, avarice would seem his ruling passion — and, all things considered, he was as unfit a subject for the plans of Katy Haynes as can be readily imagined. On entering the room, the pedler relieved himself from his burden, which, as it stood on the floor, reached nearly to his shoulders, and saluted the family with modest civility. To Harper he made a silent bow, without lifting his eyes from the carpet: but the curtain prevented any notice of the presence of Captain Wharton. Sarah gave but little time for the usual salutations, before she commenced her survey of the contents of the pack; and, for several minutes, the two were engaged in bringing to light the various articles it contained. The tables, chairs, and floor were soon covered with silks, crapes, gloves, muslins, and all the stock of an itinerant trader. Cæsar was employed to hold open the mouth of the pack, as its hoards were discharged, and occasionally he aided his young lady, by directing her admiration to some article of finery, which,

from its deeper contrast in colors, he thought more worthy of her notice. At length, Sarah, having selected several articles, and satisfactorily arranged the prices, observed in a cheerful voice, —

"But, Harvey, you have told us no news. Has Lord Cornwallis beaten the rebels again?"

The question could not have been heard; for the pedler, burying his body in the pack, brought forth a quantity of lace of exquisite fineness, and, holding it up to view, he required the admiration of the young lady. Miss Peyton dropped the cup she was engaged in washing, from her hand; and Frances exhibited the whole of that lovely face, which had hitherto only suffered one of its joyous eyes to be seen, beaming with a color that shamed the damask which enviously concealed her figure.

The aunt quitted her employment; and Birch soon disposed of a large portion of this valuable article. The praises of the ladies had drawn the whole person of the younger sister into view; and Frances was slowly rising from the window, as Sarah repeated her question, with an exultation in her voice, that proceeded more from pleasure in her purchase, than her political feelings. The younger sister resumed her seat, apparently examining the state of the clouds, while the pedler, finding a reply was expected, answered slowly, —

"There is some talk, below, about Tarleton having defeated General Sumpter, on the Tiger River."

Captain Wharton now involuntarily thrust his head between the opening of the curtains into the room; and Frances, turning her ear in breathless silence, noticed the quiet eyes of Harper looking at the pedler, over the book he was affecting to read, with an expression that denoted him to be a listener of no ordinary interest.

"Indeed!" cried the exulting Sarah; "Sumpter — Sumpter — who is he? I'll not buy even a pin, until you tell me all the news," she continued, laughing and throwing down a muslin she had been examining.

For a moment the pedler hesitated; his eye glanced towards Harper, who was yet gazing at him with settled

meaning, and the whole manner of Birch was altered. Approaching the fire, he took from his mouth a large allowance of the Virginian weed, and depositing it, with the superabundance of its juices, without mercy to Miss Peyton's shining andirons, he returned to his goods.

"He lives somewhere among the niggers to the south," answered the pedler, abruptly.

"No more nigger than be yourself, Mister Birch," interrupted Cæsar tartly, dropping at the same time the covering of the goods in high displeasure.

"Hush, Cæsar — hush; never mind it now," said Sarah Wharton soothingly, impatient to hear further.

"A black man so good as white, Miss Sally," continued the offended negro, "so long as he behave heself."

"And frequently he is much better," rejoined his mistress: "but, Harvey, who is this Mr. Sumpter?"

A slight indication of humor showed itself on the face of the pedler, but it disappeared, and he continued as if the discourse had met with no interruption from the sensitiveness of the domestic.

"As I was saying, he lives among the colored people in the south" — Cæsar resumed his occupation — "and he has lately had a skrimmage with this Colonel Tarleton" —

"Who defeated him of course?" cried Sarah, with confidence.

"So say the troops at Morrisania."

"But what do you say?" Mr. Wharton ventured to inquire, yet speaking in a low tone.

"I repeat but what I hear," said Birch offering a piece of cloth to the inspection of Sarah, who rejected it in silence, evidently determined to hear more before she made another purchase.

"They say, however, at the Plains," the pedler continued, first throwing his eyes again around the room, and letting them rest for an instant on Harper, "that Sumpter and one or two more were all that were hurt, and that the rig'lars were all cut to pieces, for the militia were fixed snugly in a log barn."

"Not very probable," said Sarah, contemptuously, "though I make no doubt the rebels got behind the logs."

"I think," said the pedler coolly, again offering the silk, "it's quite ingenious to get a log between one and a gun, instead of getting between a gun and a log."

The eyes of Harper dropped quietly on the pages of the volume in his hand, while Frances, rising, came forward with a smile in her face, as she inquired, in a tone of affability that the pedler had never before witnessed from the younger sister, —

"Have you more of the lace, Mr. Birch?"

The desired article was immediately produced, and Frances became a purchaser also. By her order a glass of liquor was offered to the trader, who took it with thanks, and, having paid his compliments to the master of the house and the ladies, drank the beverage.

"So, it is thought that Colonel Tarleton has worsted General Sumpter?" said Mr. Wharton, affecting to be employed in mending the cup that was broken by the eagerness of his sister-in-law.

"I believe they think so at Morrisania," said Birch, dryly.

"Have you any other news, friend?" asked Captain Wharton, venturing to thrust his face without the curtains again.

"Have you heard that Major André has been hanged?"

Captain Wharton started, and for a moment glances of great significance were exchanged between him and the trader, when he observed, with affected indifference, "That must have been some weeks ago."

"Does his execution make much noise?" asked the father, striving to make the broken china unite.

"People will talk, you know, 'squire."

"Is there any probability of movements below, my friend, that will make travelling dangerous?" asked Harper, looking steadily at the other, in expectation of his reply.

Some bunches of ribbons fell from the hands of Birch; his countenance changed instantly, losing its keen expression in intent meaning, as he answered slowly, "It is some time since the rig'lar cavalry were out, and I saw some of De

Lancey's men cleaning their arms, as I passed their quarters; it would be no wonder if they took the scent soon, for the Virginia horse are low in the county."

"Are they in much force?" asked Mr. Wharton, suspending all employment in anxiety.

"I did not count them."

Frances was the only observer of the change in the manner of Birch, and, on turning to Harper, he had resumed his book in silence. She took some of the ribbons in her hand — laid them down again — and, bending over the goods, so that her hair, falling in rich curls, shaded her face, she observed, blushing with a color that suffused her neck, —

"I thought the southern horse had marched towards the Delaware."

"It may be so," said Birch; "I passed the troops at a distance."

Cæsar had now selected a piece of calico, in which the gaudy colors of yellow and red were contrasted on a white ground, and, after admiring it for several minutes, he laid it down with a sigh, as he exclaimed, "Berry pretty calico."

"That," said Sarah; "yes, that would make a proper gown for your wife, Cæsar."

"Yes, Miss Sally," cried the delighted black, "it make old Dinah heart leap for joy — so berry genteel."

"Yes," added the pedler, quaintly, "that is only wanting to make Dinah look like a rainbow."

Cæsar eyed his young mistress eagerly, until she inquired of Harvey the price of the article.

"Why, much as I light of chaps," said the pedler.

"How much?" demanded Sarah in surprise.

"According to my luck in finding purchasers; for my friend Dinah, you may have it at four shillings."

"It is too much," said Sarah, turning to some goods for herself.

"Monstrous price for coarse calico, Mister Birch," grumbled Cæsar, dropping the opening of the pack again.

"We will say three, then," added the pedler, "if you like that better."

"Be sure he like 'em better," said Cæsar, smiling good-humoredly, and reopening the pack; "Miss Sally like a t'ree shilling when she give, and a four shilling when she take."

The bargain was immediately concluded; but in measuring, the cloth wanted a little of the well-known ten yards required by the dimensions of Dinah. By dint of a strong arm, however, it grew to the desired length, under the experienced eye of the pedler, who conscientiously added a ribbon of corresponding brilliancy with the calico; and Cæsar hastily withdrew, to communicate the joyful intelligence to his aged partner.

During the movements created by the conclusion of the purchase, Captain Wharton had ventured to draw aside the curtain, so as to admit a view of his person, and he now inquired of the pedler, who had begun to collect the scattered goods, at what time he had left the city.

"At early twilight," was the answer.

"So lately!" cried the other in surprise: and then correcting his manner, by assuming a more guarded air, he continued, "could you pass the pickets at so late an hour."

"I did," was the laconic reply.

"You must be well known by this time, Harvey, to the officers of the British army," cried Sarah, smiling knowingly on the pedler.

"I know some of them by sight," said Birch, glancing his eyes round the apartment, taking in their course Captain Wharton, and resting for an instant on the countenance of Harper.

Mr. Wharton had listened intently to each speaker, in succession, and had so far lost the affectation of indifference, as to be crushing in his hand the pieces of china on which he had expended so much labor in endeavoring to mend it; when, observing the pedler tying the last knot in his pack, he asked abruptly, —

"Are we about to be disturbed again with the enemy?"

"Who do you call the enemy?" said the pedler, raising himself erect, and giving the other a look, before which the eyes of Mr. Wharton sunk in instant confusion.

"All are enemies who disturb our peace," said Miss Peyton, observing that her brother was unable to speak. "But are the royal troops out from below?"

"'Tis quite likely they soon may be," returned Birch, raising his pack from the floor, and preparing to leave the room.

"And the continentals," continued Miss Peyton mildly, "are the continentals in the county?"

Harvey was about to utter something in reply, when the door opened, and Cæsar made his appearance, attended by his delighted spouse.

The race of blacks of which Cæsar was a favorable specimen is becoming very rare. The old family servant, who, born and reared in the dwelling of his master, identified himself with the welfare of those whom it was his lot to serve, is giving place in every direction to that vagrant class which has sprung up within the last thirty years, and whose members roam through the country unfettered by principles, and uninfluenced by attachments. For it is one of the curses of slavery, that its victims become incompetent to the attributes of a freeman. The short curly hair of Cæsar had acquired from age a coloring of gray, that added greatly to the venerable cast of his appearance. Long and indefatigable applications of the comb had straightened the close curls of his forehead, until they stood erect in a stiff and formal brush, that gave at least two inches to his stature. The shining black of his youth had lost its glistening hue, and it had been succeeded by a dingy brown. His eyes, which stood at a most formidable distance from each other, were small, and characterized by an expression of good feeling, occasionally interrupted by the petulance of an indulged servant; they, however, now danced with inward delight. His nose possessed, in an eminent manner, all the requisites for smelling, but with the most modest unobtrusiveness; the nostrils being abundantly capacious, without thrusting themselves in the way of their neighbors. His mouth was capacious to a fault, and was only tolerated on account of the double row of pearls it contained. In person Cæsar was short, and we should say square, had not all the angles and curves of his figure hid

defiance to anything like mathematical symmetry. His arms were long and muscular, and terminated by two bony hands, that exhibited on one side a coloring of blackish gray, and on the other, a faded pink. But it was in his legs that nature had indulged her most capricious humor. There was an abundance of material injudiciously used. The calves were neither before nor behind, but rather on the outer side of the limb, inclining forward, and so close to the knee as to render the free use of that joint a subject of doubt. In the foot, considering it as a base on which the body was to rest, Cæsar had no cause of complaint, unless, indeed, it might be that the leg was placed so near the centre, as to make it sometimes a matter of dispute, whether he was not walking backwards. But whatever might be the faults a statuary could discover in his person, the heart of Cæsar Thompson was in the right place, and, we doubt not, of very just dimensions.

Accompanied by his ancient companion, Cæsar now advanced, and paid his tribute of gratitude in words. Sarah received them with great complacency, and made a few compliments to the taste of the husband, and the probable appearance of the wife. Frances, with a face beaming with a look of pleasure that corresponded to the smiling countenances of the blacks, offered the service of her needle in fitting the admired calico to its future uses. The offer was humbly and gratefully accepted.

As Cæsar followed his wife and the pedler from the apartment, and was in the act of closing the door, he indulged himself in a grateful soliloquy, by saying aloud, —

"Good little lady — Miss Fanny — take care of he fader — love to make a gown for old Dinah, too." What else his feelings might have induced him to utter is unknown, but the sound of his voice was heard some time after the distance rendered his words indistinct.

Harper had dropped his book, and he sat an admiring witness of the scene; and Frances enjoyed a double satisfaction, as she received an approving smile from a face which concealed, under the traces of deep thought and engrossing care, the benevolent expression which characterizes all the best feelings of the human heart.

CHAPTER IV.

"It is the form, the eye, the word,
The bearing of that stranger lord,
His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
Built like a castle's battled wall,
Yet moulded in such just degrees
His giant strength seems lightsome ease.
Weather and war their rougher trace
Have left on that majestic face;
But 'tis his dignity of eye!
There, if a suppliant, would I fly,
Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
Of sympathy, redress, relief —
That glance, if guilty, would I dread
More than the doom that spoke me dead."
"Enough, enough!" the princess cried,
"'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride!"

WALTER SCOTT.

THE party sat in silence for many minutes after the pedler had withdrawn. Mr. Wharton had heard enough to increase his uneasiness, without in the least removing his apprehensions on behalf of his son. The captain was impatiently wishing Harper in any other place than the one he occupied with such apparent composure, while Miss Peyton completed the disposal of her breakfast equipage, with the mild complacency of her nature, aided a little by an inward satisfaction at possessing so large a portion of the trader's lace; Sarah was busily occupied in arranging her purchases, and Frances was kindly assisting in the occupation, disregarding her own neglected bargains, when the stranger suddenly broke the silence by saying, —

"If any apprehensions of me induce Captain Wharton to maintain his disguise, I wish him to be undeceived; had I motives for betraying him, they could not operate under present circumstances."

The younger sister sank into her seat colorless and

astonished. Miss Peyton dropped the tea-tray she was lifting from the table, and Sarah sat with her purchases unheeded in her lap, in speechless surprise. Mr. Wharton was stupefied; but the captain, hesitating a moment from astonishment, sprang into the middle of the room, and exclaimed, as he tore off the instruments of his disguise, —

"I believe you from my soul, and this tiresome imposition shall continue no longer. Yet I am at a loss to conceive in what manner you should know me."

"You really look so much better in your proper person, Captain Wharton," said Harper, with a slight smile, "I would advise you never to conceal it in future. There is enough to betray you, if other sources of detection were wanting:" as he spoke, he pointed to a picture suspended over the mantelpiece, which exhibited the British officer in his regimentals.

"I had flattered myself," cried young Wharton, with a laugh, "that I looked better on the canvas than in a masquerade. You must be a close observer, sir."

"Necessity has made me one," said Harper, rising from his seat.

Frances met him as he was about to withdraw, and, taking his hand between both her own, said with earnestness, her cheeks mantling with their richest vermilion, "You cannot — you will not betray my brother."

For an instant Harper paused in silent admiration of the lovely pleader, and then, folding her hands on his breast, he replied solemnly, "I cannot, and I will not;" he released her hands, and laying his own on her head gently, continued, "If the blessing of a stranger can profit you, receive it." He turned, and, bowing low, retired, with a delicacy that was duly appreciated by those he quitted, to his own apartment.

The whole party were deeply impressed with the ingenuous and solemn manner of the traveller, and all but the father found immediate relief in his declaration. Some of the cast-off clothes of the captain, which had been removed with the goods from the city, were produced; and young Wharton, released from the uneasiness of his dis-

guise, began at last to enjoy a visit which had been undertaken at so much personal risk to himself. Mr. Wharton retiring to his apartment, in pursuance of his regular engagements, the ladies, with the young man, were left to an uninterrupted communication on such subjects as were most agreeable. Even Miss Peyton was affected with the spirits of her young relatives; and they sat for an hour enjoying, in heedless confidence, the pleasures of an unrestrained conversation, without reflecting on any danger which might be impending over them. The city and their acquaintances were not long neglected; for Miss Peyton, who had never forgotten the many agreeable hours of her residence within its boundaries, soon inquired, among others, after their old aquaintance, Colonel Wellmere.

"Oh!" cried the captain, gayly, "he yet continues there, as handsome and as gallant as ever."

Although a woman be not actually in love, she seldom hears without a blush the name of a man whom she might love, and who has been connected with herself by idle gossips, in the amatory rumor of the day. Such had been the case with Sarah, and she dropped her eyes on the carpet with a smile, that, aided by the blush which suffused her cheek, in no degree detracted from her native charms.

Captain Wharton, without heeding this display of interest in his sister, immediately continued, "At times he is melancholy — we tell him it must be love." Sarah raised her eyes to the face of her brother, and was consciously turning them on the rest of the party, when she met those of her sister, laughing with good humor and high spirits, as she cried, "Poor man! does he despair?"

"Why, no — one would think he could not; the eldest son of a man of wealth, so handsome, and a colonel."

"Strong reasons, indeed, why he should prevail," said Sarah, endeavoring to laugh; "more particularly the latter."

"Let me tell you," replied the captain, gravely, "a lieutenant-colonelcy in the Guards is a very pretty thing."

"And Colonel Wellmere a very pretty man," added Frances.

"Nay, Frances," returned her sister, "Colonel Wellmere was never a favorite of yours; he is too loyal to his king to be agreeable to your taste."

Frances quickly answered, "And is not Henry loyal to his king?"

"Come, come," said Miss Peyton, "no difference of opinion about the colonel — he is a favorite of mine."

"Fanny likes majors better," cried the brother, pulling her upon his knee.

"Nonsense!" said the blushing girl, as she endeavored to extricate herself from the grasp of her laughing brother.

"It surprises me," continued the captain, "that Peyton, when he procured the release of my father, did not endeavor to detain my sister in the rebel camp."

"That might have endangered his own liberty," said the smiling girl, resuming her seat; "you know it is liberty for which Major Dunwoodie is fighting."

"Liberty!" exclaimed Sarah; "very pretty liberty which exchanges one master for fifty."

"The privilege of changing masters at all is a liberty."

"And one you ladies would sometimes be glad to exercise," cried the captain.

"We like, I believe, to have the liberty of choosing who they shall be in the first place," said the laughing girl; "don't we, aunt Jeanette?"

"Me!" cried Miss Peyton, starting; "what do I know of such things, child? you must ask some one else, if you wish to learn such matters."

"Ah! you would have us think you were never young! but what am I to believe of all the tales I have heard about the handsome Miss Jeanette Peyton?"

"Nonsense, my dear, nonsense," said the aunt, endeavoring to suppress a smile; "it is very silly to believe all you hear."

"Nonsense, do you call it?" cried the captain, gayly; "to this hour General Montrose toasts Miss Peyton; I heard him within the week, at Sir Henry's table."

"Why, Henry, you are as saucy as your sister; and to

break in upon your folly, I must take you to see my new home-made manufactures, which I will be bold enough to put in contrast with the finery of Birch."

The young people rose to follow their aunt, in perfect good humor with each other and the world. On ascending the stairs to the place of deposit for Miss Peyton's articles of domestic economy, she availed herself, however, of an opportunity to inquire of her nephew, whether General Montrose suffered as much from the gout as he had done when she knew him.

It is a painful discovery we make, as we advance in life, that even those we most love are not exempt from its frailties. When the heart is fresh, and the view of the future unsullied by the blemishes which have been gathered from the experience of the past, our feelings are most holy; we love to identify with the persons of our natural friends all those qualities to which we ourselves aspire, and all those virtues we have been taught to revere. The confidence with which we esteem seems a part of our nature; and there is a purity thrown around the affections which tie us to our kindred, that after-life can seldom hope to see uninjured. The family of Mr. Wharton continued to enjoy, for the remainder of the day, a happiness to which they had long been strangers; and one that sprung, in its younger members, from the delights of the most confident affection, and the exchange of the most disinterested endearments.

Harper appeared only at the dinner-table, and he retired with the cloth, under the pretense of some engagements in his own room. Notwithstanding the confidence created by his manner, the family felt his absence a relief; for the visit of Captain Wharton was necessarily to be confined to a very few days, both from the limitation of his leave of absence, and the danger of a discovery.

All dread of consequences, however, was lost in the pleasure of the meeting. Once or twice during the day, Mr. Wharton had suggested a doubt as to the character of his unknown guest, and the possibility of the detection of his

son proceeding in some manner from his information: but the idea was earnestly opposed by all his children; even Sarah uniting with her brother and sister in pleading warmly in favor of the sincerity expressed in the outward appearance of the traveller.

"Such appearances, my children," replied the desponding parent, "are but too often deceitful; when men like Major André lend themselves to the purposes of fraud, it is idle to reason from qualities, much less externals."

"Fraud!" cried his son quickly; "surely, sir, you forget that Major André was serving his king, and that the usages of war justified the measure."

"And did not the usages of war justify his death, Henry?" inquired Frances, speaking in a low voice, unwilling to abandon what she thought the cause of her country, and yet unable to suppress her feelings for the man.

"Never!" exclaimed the young man, springing from his seat, and pacing the floor rapidly; "Frances, you shock me; suppose it should be my fate, even now, to fall into the power of the rebels; you would vindicate my execution — perhaps exult in the cruelty of Washington."

"Henry!" said Frances, solemnly, quivering with emotion, and with a face pale as death, "you little know my heart."

"Pardon me, my sister — my little Fanny," cried the repentant youth, pressing her to his bosom, and kissing off the tears which had burst, spite of her resolution, from her eyes.

"It is very foolish to regard your hasty words, I know," said Frances, extricating herself from his arms, and raising her yet humid eyes to his face with a smile; "but reproach from those we love is most severe, Henry; particularly — where we — we think — we know" — her paleness gradually gave place to the color of the rose, as she concluded in a low voice, with her eyes directed to the carpet, "we are undeserving of it."

Miss Peyton moved from her own seat to the one next her niece, and, kindly taking her hand, observed, "You should not suffer the impetuosity of your brother to affect

you so much; boys, you know, are proverbially ungovernable."

"And, from my conduct, you might add cruel," said the captain, seating himself on the other side of his sister; "but on the subject of the death of André we are all of us uncommonly sensitive. You did not know him; he was all that was brave — that was accomplished — that was estimable." Frances smiled faintly, and shook her head, but made no reply. Her brother, observing the marks of incredulity in her countenance, continued, "You doubt it, and justify his death?"

"I do not doubt his worth," replied the maid, mildly, "nor his being deserving of a more happy fate; but I cannot doubt the propriety of Washington's conduct. I know but little of the customs of war, and wish to know less; but with what hopes of success could the Americans contend, if they yielded all the principles which long usage had established, to the exclusive purposes of the British?"

"Why contend at all?" cried Sarah, impatiently; "besides, being rebels, all their acts are illegal."

"Women are but mirrors, which reflect the images before them," cried the captain, good-naturedly. "In Frances I see the picture of Major Dunwoodie, and in Sarah" —

"Colonel Wellmere," interrupted the younger sister, laughing, and blushing crimson. "I must confess I am indebted to the major for my reasoning — am I not, aunt Jeanette?"

"I believe it is something like his logic, indeed, child."

"I plead guilty; and you, Sarah, have not forgotten the learned discussions of Colonel Wellmere."

"I trust I never forget the right," said Sarah, emulating her sister in color, and rising, under the pretense of avoiding the heat of the fire.

Nothing occurred of any moment during the rest of the day; but in the evening Cæsar reported that he had overheard voices in the room of Harper, conversing in a low tone. The apartment occupied by the traveller was the wing at the extremity of the building, opposite to the parlor in which the family ordinarily assembled; and it seems,

that Cæsar had established a regular system of espionage, with a view to the safety of his young master. This intelligence gave some uneasiness to all the members of the family; but the entrance of Harper himself, with the air of benevolence and sincerity which shone through his reserve, soon removed the doubts from the breast of all but Mr Wharton. His children and sister believed Cæsar to have been mistaken, and the evening passed off without any additional alarm.

On the afternoon of the succeeding day, the party were assembled in the parlor around the tea-table of Miss Peyton, when a change in the weather occurred. The thin *scud*, that apparently floated but a short distance above the tops of the hills, began to drive from the west towards the east in astonishing rapidity. The rain yet continued to beat against the eastern windows of the house with fury; in that direction the heavens were dark and gloomy. Frances was gazing at the scene with the desire of youth to escape from the tedium of confinement, when, as if by magic, all was still. The rushing winds had ceased, the pelting of the storm was over, and, springing to the window, with delight pictured in her face, she saw a glorious ray of sunshine lighting the opposite wood. The foliage glittered with the checkered beauties of the October leaf, reflecting back from the moistened boughs the richest lustre of an American autumn. In an instant, the piazza, which opened to the south, was thronged with the inmates of the cottage. The air was mild, balmy, and refreshing; in the east, clouds, which might be likened to the retreating masses of a discomfited army, hung around the horizon in awful and increasing darkness. At a little elevation above the cottage, the thin vapor was still rushing towards the east with amazing velocity; while in the west the sun had broken forth and shed his parting radiance on the scene below, aided by the fullest richness of a clear atmosphere and a freshened herbage. Such moments belong only to the climate of America, and are enjoyed in a degree proportioned to the suddenness of the contrast, and the pleasure we experience in escaping from the turbulence of the elements to the quiet of a

peaceful evening, and an air still as the softest mornings in June.

"What a magnificent scene!" said Harper, in a low tone; "how grand! how awfully sublime! — may such a quiet speedily await the struggle in which my country is engaged, and such a glorious evening follow the day of her adversity!"

Frances, who stood next to him, alone heard the voice. Turning in amazement from the view to the speaker, she saw him standing bareheaded, erect, and with his eyes lifted to heaven. There was no longer the quiet which had seemed their characteristic, but they were lighted into something like enthusiasm, and a slight flush passed over his features.

There can be no danger apprehended from such a man, thought Frances; such feelings belong only to the virtuous.

The musings of the party were now interrupted by the sudden appearance of the pedler. He had taken advantage of the first gleam of sunshine to hasten to the cottage. Heedless of wet or dry as it lay in his path, with arms swinging to and fro, and with his head bent forward of his body several inches, Harvey Birch approached the piazza, with a gait peculiarly his own. It was the quick, lengthened pace of an itinerant vender of goods.

"Fine evening," said the pedler, saluting the party, without raising his eyes; "quite warm and agreeable for the season."

Mr. Wharton assented to the remark, and inquired kindly after the health of his father. Harvey heard him, and continued standing for some time in moody silence; but the question being repeated, he answered with a slight tremor in his voice, —

"He fails fast; old age and hardships will do their work." The pedler turned his face from the view of most of the family; but Frances noticed his glistening eyes and quivering lip, and, for the second time, Harvey rose in her estimation.

The valley in which the residence of Mr. Wharton stood ran in a direction from northwest to southeast, and the

house was placed on the side of a hill which terminated its length in the former direction. A small opening, occasioned by the receding of the opposite hill, and the fall of the land to the level of the tide water, afforded a view of the Sound[1] over the tops of the distant woods on its margin. The surface of the water which had so lately been lashing the shores with boisterous fury, was already losing its ruffled darkness in the long and regular undulations that succeeded a tempest, while the light air from the southwest was gently touching their summits, lending its feeble aid in stilling the waters. Some dark spots were now to be distinguished, occasionally rising into view, and again sinking behind the lengthened waves which interposed themselves to the sight. They were unnoticed by all but the pedler. He had seated himself on the piazza, at a distance from Harper, and appeared to have forgotten the object of his visit. His roving eye, however, soon caught a glimpse of these new objects in the view, and he sprang up with alacrity, gazing intently towards the water. He changed his place, glanced his eye with marked uneasiness on Harper, and then said with great emphasis —

"The rig'lars must be out from below."

"Why do you think so?" inquired Captain Wharton, eagerly. "God send it may be true; I want their escort in again."

"Them ten whaleboats would not move so fast unless they were better manned than common."

"Perhaps," cried Mr. Wharton in alarm, "they are — they are continentals returning from the island."

"They look like rig'lars," said the pedler, with meaning.

"Look!" repeated the captain, "there is nothing but spots to be seen."

Harvey disregarded his observation, but seemed to be soliloquizing, as he said in an undertone, "They came out

[1] An island more than forty leagues in length lies opposite the coasts of New York and Connecticut. The arm of the sea which separates it from the main is technically called a sound, and in that part of the country *par excellence*, *The* Sound. This sheet of water varies in its breadth from five to thirty miles.

before the gale — have laid on the island these two days — horse are on the road — there will soon be fighting near us." During this speech, Birch several times glanced his eye towards Harper, with evident uneasiness, but no corresponding emotion betrayed any interest of that gentleman in the scene. He stood in silent contemplation of the view, and seemed enjoying the change in the air. As Birch concluded, however, Harper turned to his host, and mentioned that his business would not admit of unnecessary delay; he would, therefore, avail himself of the fine evening to ride a few miles on his journey. Mr. Wharton made many professions of regret at losing so agreeable an inmate; but was too mindful of his duty not to speed the parting guest, and orders were instantly given to that effect.

The uneasiness of the pedler increased in a manner for which nothing apparent could account; his eye was constantly wandering towards the lower end of the vale, as if in expectation of some interruption from that quarter. At length Cæsar appeared, leading the noble beast which was to bear the weight of the traveller. The pedler officiously assisted to tighten the girths, and fasten the blue cloak and valise to the mail-straps.

Every preparation being completed, Harper proceeded to take his leave. To Sarah and her aunt he paid his compliments with ease and kindness; but when he came to Frances, he paused a moment, while his face assumed an expression of more than ordinary benignity. His eye repeated the blessing which had before fallen from his lips, and the girl felt her cheeks glow, and her heart beat, with a quicker pulsation, as he spoke his adieus. There was a mutual exchange of polite courtesy between the host and his parting guest; but as Harper frankly offered his hand to Captain Wharton, he remarked, in a manner of great solemnity, —

"The step you have undertaken is one of much danger, and disagreeable consequences to yourself may result from it; in such a case, I may have it in my power to prove the gratitude I owe your family for its kindness."

"Surely, sir," cried the father, losing sight of delicacy in apprehension for his child, "you will keep secret the discovery which your being in my house has enabled you to make?"

Harper turned quickly to the speaker, and then, losing the sternness which had begun to gather on his countenance, he answered mildly, "I have learnt nothing in your family, sir, of which I was ignorant before; but your son is safer from my knowledge of his visit than he would be without it."

He bowed to the whole party, and without taking any notice of the pedler, other than by simply thanking him for his attentions, mounted his horse, and, riding steadily and gracefully through the little gate, was soon lost behind the hill which sheltered the valley to the northward.

The eyes of the pedler followed the retiring figure of the horseman so long as it continued within view, and as it disappeared from his sight, he drew a long and heavy sigh, as if relieved from a load of apprehension. The Whartons had meditated in silence on the character and visit of their unknown guest for the same period, when the father approached Birch, and observed, —

"I am yet your debtor, Harvey, for the tobacco you were so kind as to bring me from the city."

"If it should not prove so good as the first," replied the pedler, fixing a last and lingering look in the direction of Harper's route, "it is owing to the scarcity of the article."

"I like it much," continued the other; "but you have forgotten to name the price."

The countenance of the trader changed, and, losing its expression of deep care in a natural acuteness, he answered, —

"It is hard to say what ought to be the price: I believe I must leave it to your own generosity."

Mr. Wharton had taken a hand well filled with the images of Carolus III. from his pocket, and now extended it towards Birch with three of the pieces between his finger and thumb. Harvey's eyes twinkled as he contemplated the reward; and rolling over in his mouth a large quantity

of the article in question, coolly stretched forth his hand, into which the dollars fell with a most agreeable sound: but not satisfied with the transient music of their fall, the pedler gave each piece in succession a ring on the stepping-stone of the piazza, before he consigned it to the safe keeping of a huge deerskin purse, which vanished from the sight of the spectators so dexterously, that not one of them could have told about what part of his person it was secreted.

This very material point in his business so satisfactorily completed, the pedler rose from his seat on the floor of the piazza, and approached to where Captain Wharton stood, supporting his sisters on either arm, as they listened with the lively interest of affection to his conversation.

The agitation of the preceding incidents had caused such an expenditure of the juices which had become necessary to the mouth of the pedler, that a new supply of the weed was required before he could turn his attention to business of lesser moment. This done, he asked abruptly, —

"Captain Wharton, do you go in to-night?"

"No!" said the captain, laconically, and looking at his lovely burdens with great affection. "Mr. Birch, would you have me leave such company so soon, when I may never enjoy it again?"

"Brother!" said Frances, "jesting on such a subject is cruel."

"I rather guess," continued the pedler, coolly, "now the storm is over, the Skinners may be moving; you had better shorten your visit, Captain Wharton."

"Oh!" cried the British officer, "a few guineas will buy off those rascals at any time, should I meet them. No, no, Mr. Birch, here I stay until morning."

"Money could not liberate Major André," said the pedler, dryly.

Both the sisters now turned to the captain in alarm, and the elder observed, —

"You had better take the advice of Harvey; rest assured, brother, his opinion in such matters ought not to be disregarded."

"Yes," added the younger, "if, as I suspect, Mr. Birch assisted you to come here, your safety, our happiness, dear Henry, requires you to listen to him now."

"I brought myself out, and can take myself in," said the captain positively; "our bargain went no further than to procure my disguise, and to let me know when the coast was clear; and in the latter particular, you were mistaken, Mr. Birch."

"I was," said the pedler, with some interest, "and the greater is the reason why you should get back to-night; the pass I gave you will serve but once."

"Cannot you forge another?"

The pale cheek of the trader showed an unusual color, but he continued silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground, until the young man added, with great positiveness, "Here I stay this night, come what will."

"Captain Wharton," said the pedler, with great deliberation and marked emphasis, "beware a tall Virginian, with huge whiskers; he is below you, to my knowledge; the devil can't deceive him; I never could but once."

"Let him beware of me," said Wharton, haughtily; "but, Mr. Birch, I exonerate you from further responsibility."

"Will you give me that in writing?" asked the cautious Birch.

"Oh! cheerfully," cried the captain, with a laugh; "Cæsar! pen, ink, and paper, while I write a discharge for my trusty attendant, Harvey Birch, pedler, etc., etc."

The implements for writing were produced, and the captain, with great gayety, wrote the desired acknowledgment in language of his own; which the pedler took, and carefully depositing it by the side of the images of his Catholic Majesty, made a sweeping bow to the whole family, and departed as he had approached. He was soon seen at a distance, stealing into the door of his own humble dwelling.

The father and sisters of the captain were too much rejoiced in retaining the young man to express, or even entertain, the apprehensions his situation might reasona-

bly excite; but on retiring to their evening repast, a cooler reflection induced the captain to think of changing his mind. Unwilling to trust himself out of the protection of his father's domains, the young man dispatched Cæsar to desire another interview with Harvey. The black soon returned with the unwelcome intelligence that it was now too late. Katy had told him that Harvey must be miles on his road to the northward, "having left home at early candle-light with his pack." Nothing now remained to the captain but patience, until the morning should afford further opportunity of deciding on the best course for him to pursue.

"This Harvey Birch, with his knowing looks and portentous warnings, gives me more uneasiness than I am willing to own," said Captain Wharton, rousing himself from a fit of musing, in which the danger of his situation made no small part of his meditations.

"How is it that he is able to travel to and fro in these difficult times, without molestation?" inquired Miss Peyton.

"Why the rebels suffer him to escape so easily, is more than I can answer," returned the other; "but Sir Henry would not permit a hair of his head to be injured."

"Indeed!" cried Frances, with interest; "is he then known to Sir Henry Clinton?"

"At least he ought to be."

"Do you think, my son," asked Mr. Wharton, "there is no danger of his betraying you?"

"Why — no; I reflected on that before I trusted myself to his power," said the captain, thoughtfully; "he seems to be faithful in matters of business. The danger to himself, should he return to the city, would prevent such an act of villainy."

"I think," said Frances, adopting the manner of her brother, "Harvey Birch is not without good feelings; at least, he has the appearance of them at times."

"Oh!" cried his sister, exulting, "he has loyalty, and that with me is a cardinal virtue."

"I am afraid," said her brother, laughing, "love of money is a stronger passion than love of his king."

"Then," said the father, "you cannot be safe while in his power — for no love will withstand the temptation of money, when offered to avarice."

"Surely, sir," cried the youth, recovering his gayety, "there must be one love that can resist anything — is there not, Fanny?"

"Here is your candle; you keep your father up beyond his usual hour."

CHAPTER V.

Through Solway sands, through Tarass moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross:
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds.
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight or matin prime.

WALTER SCOTT.

ALL the members of the Wharton family laid their heads on their pillows that night, with a foreboding of some interruption to their ordinary quiet. Uneasiness kept the sisters from enjoying their usual repose, and they rose from their beds, on the following morning, unrefreshed, and almost without having closed their eyes.

On taking an eager and hasty survey of the valley from the windows of their room, nothing, however, but its usual serenity was to be seen. It was glittering with the opening brilliancy of one of those lovely, mild days, which occur about the time of the falling of the leaf; and which, by their frequency, class the American autumn with the most delightful seasons of other countries. We have no spring; vegetation seems to leap into existence, instead of creeping, as in the same latitudes of the Old World; but how gracefully it retires! September, October, even November and December, compose the season for enjoyment in the open air; they have their storms, but they are distinct, and not of long continuance, leaving a clear atmosphere and a cloudless sky.

As nothing could be seen likely to interrupt the enjoyments and harmony of such a day, the sisters descended to

the parlor, with a returning confidence in their brother's security, and their own happiness.

The family were early in assembling around the breakfast table; and Miss Peyton, with a little of that minute precision which creeps into the habits of single life, had pleasantly insisted that the absence of her nephew should in no manner interfere with the regular hours she had established; consequently, the party were already seated when the captain made his appearance; though the untasted coffee sufficiently proved that by none of his relatives was his absence disregarded.

"I think I did much better," he cried, taking a chair between his sisters, and receiving their offered salutes, "to secure a good bed and such a plentiful breakfast, instead of trusting to the hospitality of that renowned corps, the Cow-Boys."

"If you could sleep," said Sarah, "you were more fortunate than Frances and myself; every murmur of the night air sounded to me like the approach of the rebel army."

"Why," said the captain, laughing, "I do acknowledge a little inquietude myself — but how was it with you?" turning to his younger and evidently favorite sister, and tapping her cheek; "did you see banners in the clouds, and mistake Miss Peyton's Æolian harp for rebellious music?"

"Nay, Henry," rejoined the maid, looking at him affectionately, "much as I love my own country, the approach of her troops just now would give me great pain."

The brother made no reply; but returning the fondness expressed in her eye by a look of fraternal tenderness, he gently pressed her hand in silence; when Cæsar, who had participated largely in the anxiety of the family, and who had risen with the dawn, and kept a vigilant watch on the surrounding objects, as he stood gazing from one of the windows, exclaimed with a face that approached to something like the hues of a white man, —

"Run — Massa Harry — run — if he love old Cæsar, run — here come a rebel horse."

"Run!" repeated the British officer, gathering himself up in military pride; "no, Mr. Cæsar, running is not my trade." While speaking, he walked deliberately to the window, where the family were already collected in the greatest consternation.

At the distance of more than a mile, about fifty dragoons were to be seen, winding down one of the lateral entrances of the valley. In advance, with an officer, was a man attired in the dress of a countryman, who pointed in the direction of the cottage. A small party now left the main body, and moved rapidly towards the object of their destination.

On reaching the road which led through the bottom of the valley, they turned their horses' heads to the north.

The Whartons continued chained in breathless silence to the spot, watching their movements, when the party, having reached the dwelling of Birch, made a rapid circle around his grounds, and in an instant his house was surrounded by a dozen sentinels.

Two or three of the dragoons now dismounted and disappeared: in a few minutes, however, they returned to the yard, followed by Katy, from whose violent gesticulations, it was evident that matters of no trifling concern were on the carpet. A short communication with the loquacious housekeeper followed the arrival of the main body of the troop, and the advanced party remounting, the whole moved towards the Locusts with great speed.

As yet none of the family had sufficient presence of mind to devise any means of security for Captain Wharton; but the danger now became too pressing to admit of longer delay, and various means of secreting him were hastily proposed; but they were all haughtily rejected by the young man, as unworthy of his character. It was too late to retreat to the woods in the rear of the cottage, for he would unavoidably be seen, and, followed by a troop of horse, as inevitably taken.

At length, his sisters, with trembling hands, replaced his original disguise, the instruments of which had been carefully kept at hand by Cæsar, in expectation of some sudden emergency.

This arrangement was hastily and imperfectly completed, as the dragoons entered the lawn and orchard of the Locusts, riding with the rapidity of the wind; and in their turn the Whartons were surrounded.

Nothing remained now, but to meet the impending examination with as much indifference as the family could assume. The leader of the horse dismounted, and, followed by a couple of his men, he approached the outer door of the building, which was slowly and reluctantly opened for his admission by Cæsar. The heavy tread of the trooper, as he followed the black to the door of the parlor, rang in the ears of the females as it approached nearer and nearer, and drove the blood from their faces to their hearts, with a chill that nearly annihilated feeling.

A man, whose colossal stature manifested the possession of vast strength, entered the room, and removing his cap, he saluted the family with a mildness his appearance did not indicate as belonging to his nature. His dark hair hung around his brow in profusion, though stained with the powder which was worn at that day, and his face was nearly hid in the whiskers by which it was disfigured. Still, the expression of his eye, though piercing, was not bad, and his voice, though deep and powerful, was far from unpleasant. Frances ventured to throw a timid glance at his figure as he entered, and saw at once the man from whose scrutiny Harvey Birch had warned them there was so much to be apprehended.

"You have no cause for alarm, ladies," said the officer, pausing a moment, and contemplating the pale faces around him; "my business will be confined to a few questions, which, if freely answered, will instantly remove us from your dwelling."

"And what may they be, sir?" stammered Mr. Wharton, rising from his chair, and waiting anxiously for the reply.

"Has there been a strange gentleman staying with you during the storm?" continued the dragoon, speaking with interest, and in some degree sharing in the evident anxiety of the father.

"This gentleman — here — favored us with his company during the rain. and has not yet departed."

"This gentleman!" repeated the other, turning to Captain Wharton, and contemplating his figure for a moment, until the anxiety of his countenance gave place to a lurking smile. He approached the youth with an air of comic gravity, and with a low bow, continued, "I am sorry for the severe cold you have in your head, sir."

"I!" exclaimed the captain, in surprise; "I have no cold in my head."

"I fancied it then, from seeing you had covered such handsome black locks with that ugly old wig; it was my mistake; you will please to pardon it."

Mr. Wharton groaned aloud; but the ladies, ignorant of the extent of their visitor's knowledge, remained in trembling yet rigid silence. The captain himself moved his hand involuntarily to his head, and discovered that the trepidation of his sisters had left some of his natural hair exposed. The dragoon watched the movement with a continued smile, when, seeming to recollect himself, turning to the father, he proceeded,—

"Then, sir, I am to understand there has not been a Mr. Harper here, within the week?"

"Mr. Harper," echoed the other, feeling a load removed from his heart, "yes, — I had forgotten; but he is gone; and if there be anything wrong in his character, we are in entire ignorance of it; to me he was a total stranger."

"You have but little to apprehend from his character," answered the dragoon dryly; "but he is gone — how — when — and whither?"

"He departed as he arrived," said Mr. Wharton, gathering renewed confidence from the manner of the trooper; "on horseback, last evening, and he took the northern road."

The officer listened to him with intense interest, his countenance gradually lighting into a smile of pleasure and the instant Mr. Wharton concluded his laconic reply he turned on his heel and left the apartment. The Whartons, judging from his manner, thought he was about to

proceed in quest of the object of his inquiries. They observed the dragoon, on gaining the lawn, in earnest, and apparently pleased conversation with his two subalterns. In a few moments orders were given to some of the troop, and horsemen left the valley, at full speed, by its various roads.

The suspense of the party within, who were all highly interested witnesses of this scene, was shortly terminated; for the heavy tread of the dragoon soon announced his second approach. He bowed again politely as he reëntered the room, and walking up to Captain Wharton, said, with comic gravity, —

"Now, sir, my principal business being done, may I beg to examine the quality of that wig?"

The British officer imitated the manner of the other, as he deliberately uncovered his head, and handing him the wig, observed, "I hope, sir, it is to your liking."

"I cannot, without violating the truth, say it is," returned the dragoon; "I prefer your ebony hair, from which you seem to have combed the powder with great industry. But that must have been a sad hurt you have received under this enormous black patch."

"You appear so close an observer of things, I should like your opinion of it, sir," said Henry, removing the silk, and exhibiting the cheek free from blemish.

"Upon my word, you improve most rapidly in externals," added the trooper, preserving his muscles in inflexible gravity: "if I could but persuade you to exchange this old surtout for that handsome blue coat by your side, I think I never could witness a more agreeable metamorphosis, since I was changed myself from a lieutenant to a captain."

Young Wharton very composedly did as was required; and stood an extremely handsome, well-dressed young man. The dragoon looked at him for a minute with the drollery that characterized his manner, and then continued, —

"This is a new-comer in the scene; it is usual, you know, for strangers to be introduced; I am Captain Lawton, of the Virginia horse."

"And I, sir, am Captain Wharton, of his Majesty's 60th regiment of foot," returned Henry, bowing stiffly, and recovering his natural manner.

The countenance of Lawton changed instantly, and his assumed quaintness vanished. He viewed the figure of Captain Wharton, as he stood proudly swelling with a pride that disdained further concealment, and exclaimed, with great earnestness, —

"Captain Wharton, from my soul I pity you!"

"Oh! then," cried the father in agony, "if you pity him, dear sir, why molest him? he is not a spy; nothing but a desire to see his friends prompted him to venture so far from the regular army in disguise. Leave him with us; there is no reward, no sum, which I will not cheerfully pay."

"Sir, your anxiety for your friend excuses your language," said Lawton, haughtily; "but you forget I am a Virginian, and a gentleman." Turning to the young man, he continued, "Were you ignorant, Captain Wharton, that our pickets have been below you for several days?"

"I did not know it until I reached them, and it was then too late to retreat," said Wharton, sullenly. "I came out, as my father has mentioned, to see my friends, understanding your parties to be at Peekskill, and near the Highlands, or surely I would not have ventured."

"All this may be very true; but the affair of André has made us on the alert. When treason reaches the grade of general officers, Captain Wharton, it behooves the friends of liberty to be vigilant."

Henry bowed to this remark in distant silence, but Sarah ventured to urge something in behalf of her brother. The dragoon heard her politely, and apparently with commiseration; but willing to avoid useless and embarrassing petitions, he answered mildly, —

"I am not the commander of the party, madam; Major Dunwoodie will decide what must be done with your brother; at all events he will receive nothing but kind and gentle treatment."

"Dunwoodie!" exclaimed Frances, with a face in which

the roses contended for the mastery with the paleness of apprehension ; " thank God ! then Henry is safe ! "

Lawton regarded her with a mingled expression of pity and admiration ; then shaking his head doubtingly, he continued, —

" I hope so ; and with your permission, we will leave the matter for his decision."

The color of Frances changed from the paleness of fear to the glow of hope. Her dread on behalf of her brother was certainly greatly diminished ; yet her form shook, her breathing became short and irregular, and her whole frame gave tokens of extraordinary agitation. Her eyes rose from the floor to the dragoon, and were again fixed immovably on the carpet — she evidently wished to utter something but was unequal to the effort. Miss Peyton was a close observer of these movements of her niece, and advancing with an air of feminine dignity, inquired, —

" Then, sir, we may expect the pleasure of Major Dunwoodie's company shortly ? "

" Immediately, madam," answered the dragoon, withdrawing his admiring gaze from the person of Frances ; " expresses are already on the road to announce to him our situation, and the intelligence will speedily bring him to this valley ; unless, indeed, some private reasons may exist to make a visit particularly unpleasant."

" We shall always be happy to see Major Dunwoodie."

" Oh ! doubtless ; he is a general favorite. May I presume on it so far as to ask leave to dismount and refresh my men, who compose a part of his squadron ? "

There was a manner about the trooper, that would have made the omission of such a request easily forgiven by Mr. Wharton, but he was fairly entrapped by his own eagerness to conciliate, and it was useless to withhold a consent which he thought would probably be extorted ; he therefore made the most of necessity, and gave such orders as would facilitate the wishes of Captain Lawton.

The officers were invited to take their morning's repast at the family breakfast table, and having made their arrangements without, the invitation was frankly accepted.

None of the watchfulness, which was so necessary to their situation, was neglected by the wary partisan. Patrols were seen on the distant hills, taking their protecting circuit around their comrades, who were enjoying, in the midst of dangers, a security that can only spring from the watchfulness of discipline, and the indifference of habit.

The addition to the party at Mr. Wharton's table was only three, and they were all of them men who, under the rough exterior induced by actual and arduous service, concealed the manners of gentlemen. Consequently, the interruption to the domestic privacy of the family was marked by the observance of strict decorum. The ladies left the table to their guests, who proceeded, without much superfluous diffidence, to do proper honors to the hospitality of Mr. Wharton.

At length Captain Lawton suspended for a moment his violent attacks on the buckwheat cakes, to inquire of the master of the house, if there was not a pedler of the name of Birch who lived in the valley at times.

"At times only, I believe, sir," replied Mr. Wharton, cautiously; "he is seldom here; I may say I never see him."

"That is strange, too," said the trooper, looking at the disconcerted host intently, "considering he is your next neighbor; he must be quite domestic, sir; and to the ladies it must be somewhat inconvenient. I doubt not that that muslin in the window-seat cost twice as much as he would have asked them for it."

Mr. Wharton turned in consternation, and saw some of the recent purchases scattered about the room.

The two subalterns struggled to conceal their smiles; but the captain resumed his breakfast with an eagerness that created a doubt, whether he ever expected to enjoy another. The necessity of a supply from the dominion of Dinah soon, however, afforded another respite, of which Lawton availed himself.

"I had a wish to break this Mr. Birch of his unsocial habits, and gave him a call this morning," he said: "had I found him within, I should have placed him where he

would enjoy life in the midst of society, for a short time at least."

"And where might that be, sir?" asked Mr. Wharton, conceiving it necessary to say something.

"The guard-room," said the trooper, dryly.

"What is the offense of poor Birch?" asked Miss Peyton, handing the dragoon a fourth dish of coffee.

"Poor!" cried the captain; "if he is poor, King George is a bad paymaster."

"Yes, indeed," said one of the subalterns, "his Majesty owes him a dukedom."

"And congress a halter," continued the commanding officer, commencing anew on a fresh supply of the cakes.

"I am sorry," said Mr. Wharton, "that any neighbor of mine should incur the displeasure of our rulers."

"If I catch him," cried the dragoon, while buttering another cake, "he will dangle from the limbs of one of his namesakes."

"He would make no bad ornament, suspended from one of those locusts before his own door," added the lieutenant.

"Never mind," continued the captain; "I will have him yet before I'm a major."

As the language of the officers appeared to be sincere, and such as disappointed men in their rough occupations are but too apt to use, the Whartons thought it prudent to discontinue the subject. It was no new intelligence to any of the family, that Harvey Birch was distrusted and greatly harassed by the American army. His escapes from their hands, no less than his imprisonments, had been the conversation of the country in too many instances, and under circumstances of too great mystery, to be easily forgotten. In fact, no small part of the bitterness expressed by Captain Lawton against the pedler, arose from the unaccountable disappearance of the latter, when intrusted to the custody of two of his most faithful dragoons.

A twelvemonth had not yet elapsed, since Birch had been seen lingering near the headquarters of the commander-in-chief, and at a time when important movements were

expected hourly to occur. So soon as the information of this fact was communicated to the officer whose duty it was to guard the avenues of the American camp, he dispatched Captain Lawton in pursuit of the pedler.

Acquainted with all the passes of the hills, and indefatigable in the discharge of his duty, the trooper had, with much trouble and toil, succeeded in effecting his object. The party had halted at a farm-house for the purposes of refreshment, and the prisoner was placed in a room by himself, but under the keeping of the two men before mentioned; all that was known subsequently is, that a woman was seen busily engaged in the employments of the household near the sentinels, and was particularly attentive to the wants of the captain, until he was deeply engaged in the employments of the supper-table.

Afterwards, neither woman nor pedler was to be found. The pack, indeed, was discovered open, and nearly empty, and a small door, communicating with a room adjoining to the one in which the pedler had been secured, was ajar.

Captain Lawton never could forgive the deception: his antipathies to his enemies were not very moderate, but this was adding an insult to his penetration that rankled deeply. He sat in portentous silence, brooding over the exploit of his prisoner, yet mechanically pursuing the business before him, until, after sufficient time had passed to make a very comfortable meal, a trumpet suddenly broke on the ears of the party, sending its martial tones up the valley, in startling melody. The trooper rose instantly from the table, exclaiming, —

"Quick, gentlemen, to your horses: there comes Dunwoodie;" and, followed by his officers, he precipitately left the room.

With the exception of the sentinels left to guard Captain Wharton, the dragoons mounted, and marched out to meet their comrades.

None of the watchfulness necessary in a war, in which similarity of language, appearance, and customs, rendered prudence doubly necessary, was omitted by the cautious leader. On getting sufficiently near, however, to a body of

horse of more than double his own number, to distinguish countenances, Lawton plunged his rowels into his charger, and in a moment he was by the side of his commander.

The ground in front of the cottage was again occupied by the horse; and observing the same precautions as before, the newly arrived troops hastened to participate in the cheer prepared for their comrades.

CHAPTER VI.

> And let conquerors boast
> Their fields of fame — he who in virtue arms
> A young warm spirit against beauty's charms,
> Who feels her brightness, yet defies her thrall,
> Is the best, bravest conqueror of them all.
>
> MOORE.

THE ladies of the Wharton family had collected about a window, deeply interested in the scene we have related.

Sarah viewed the approach of her countrymen with a smile of contemptuous indifference; for she even undervalued the personal appearance of men whom she thought arrayed in the unholy cause of rebellion. Miss Peyton looked on the gallant show with an exulting pride, which arose in the reflection that the warriors before her were the chosen troops of her native colony; while Frances gazed with a singleness of interest that absorbed all other considerations.

The two parties had not yet joined, before her quick eye distinguished one horseman in particular from those around him. To her it appeared that even the steed of this youthful soldier seemed to be conscious that he sustained the weight of no common man: his hoofs but lightly touched the earth, and his airy tread was the curbed motion of a blooded charger.

The dragoon sat in the saddle, with a firmness and ease that showed him master of himself and horse, — his figure uniting the just proportions of strength and activity, being tall, round, and muscular. To this officer Lawton made his report, and, side by side, they rode into the field opposite to the cottage.

The heart of Frances beat with a pulsation nearly stifling, as he paused for a moment, and took a survey of the

building, with an eye whose dark and sparkling glance could be seen, notwithstanding the distance. Her color changed, and for an instant, as she saw the youth throw himself from the saddle, she was compelled to seek relief for her trembling limbs in a chair.

The officer gave a few hasty orders to his second in command, walked rapidly into the lawn, and approached the cottage. Frances rose from her seat, and vanished from the apartment. The dragoon ascended the steps of the piazza, and had barely time to touch the outer door, when it opened to his admission.

The youth of Frances, when she left the city, had prevented her sacrificing, in conformity to the customs of that day, all her native beauties on the altar of fashion. Her hair, which was of a golden richness of color, was left, untortured, to fall in the natural ringlets of infancy, and it shaded a face which was glowing with the united charms of health, youth, and artlessness; her eyes spoke volumes, but her tongue was silent; her hands were interlocked before her, and, aided by her taper form, bending forward in an attitude of expectation, gave a loveliness and an interest to her appearance, that for a moment chained her lover in silence to the spot.

Frances silently led the way into a vacant parlor, opposite to the one in which the family were assembled, and turning to the soldier frankly, placing both her hands in his own, exclaimed, —

"Ah, Dunwoodie! how happy, on many accounts, I am to see you! I have brought you in here, to prepare you to meet an unexpected friend in the opposite room."

"To whatever cause it may be owing," cried the youth, pressing her hands to his lips, "I, too, am happy in being able to see you alone. Frances, the probation you have decreed is cruel; war and distance may shortly separate us forever."

"We must submit to the necessity which governs us. But it is not love speeches I would hear now: I have other and more important matter for your attention."

"What can be of more importance than to make you

mine by a tie that will be indissoluble! Frances, you are cold to me — me — from whose mind, days of service and nights of alarm have never been able to banish your image for a single moment."

"Dear Dunwoodie," said Frances, softening nearly to tears, and again extending her hand to him, as the richness of her color gradually returned, "you know my sentiments — this war once ended, and you may take that hand forever — but I can never consent to tie myself to you by any closer union than already exists, so long as you are arrayed in arms against my only brother. Even now, that brother is awaiting your decision to restore him to liberty, or to conduct him to a probable death."

"Your brother!" cried Dunwoodie, starting and turning pale; "your brother! explain yourself — what dreadful meaning is concealed in your words?"

"Has not Captain Lawton told you of the arrest of Henry by himself this very morning?" continued Frances, in a voice barely audible, and fixing on her lover a look of the deepest concern.

"He told me of arresting a captain of the 60th in disguise, but without mentioning where or whom," replied the major in a similar tone; and dropping his head between his hands, he endeavored to conceal his feelings from his companion.

"Dunwoodie! Dunwoodie!" exclaimed Frances, losing all her former confidence in the most fearful apprehensions, "what means this agitation?" As the major slowly raised his face, in which was pictured the most expressive concern, she continued, "Surely, surely, you will not betray your friend — my brother — your brother — to an ignominious death."

"Frances!" exclaimed the young man in agony, "what can I do?"

"Do!" she repeated, gazing at him wildly; "would Major Dunwoodie yield his friend to his enemies — the brother of his betrothed wife?"

"Oh, speak not so unkindly to me, dearest Miss Wharton — my own Frances. I would this moment die for you —

for Henry — but I cannot forget my duty — cannot forfeit my honor; you yourself would be the first to despise me if I did."

"Peyton Dunwoodie!" said Frances, solemnly, and with a face of ashy paleness, "you have told me — you have sworn, that you love me" —

"I do," interrupted the soldier, with fervor; but motioning for silence she continued, in a voice that trembled with her fears, —

"Do you think I can throw myself into the arms of a man whose hands are stained with the blood of my only brother!"

"Frances, you wring my very heart;" then pausing, to struggle with his feelings, he endeavored to force a smile, as he added, "but, after all, we may be torturing ourselves with unnecessary fears, and Henry, when I know the circumstances, may be nothing more than a prisoner of war; in which case, I can liberate him on parole."

There is no more delusive passion than hope; and it seems to be the happy privilege of youth to cull all the pleasures that can be gathered from its indulgence. It is when we are most worthy of confidence ourselves, that we are least apt to distrust others; and what we think ought to be, we are prone to think will be.

The half-formed expectations of the young soldier were communicated to the desponding sister, more by the eye than the voice, and the blood rushed again to her cheek, as she cried, —

"Oh, there can be no just grounds to doubt it: I knew — I knew — Dunwoodie, you would never desert us in the hour of our greatest need!" The violence of her feelings prevailed, and the agitated girl found relief in a flood of tears.

The office of consoling those we love is one of the dearest prerogatives of affection; and Major Dunwoodie, although but little encouraged by his own momentary suggestion of relief, could not undeceive the lovely girl, who leaned on his shoulder, as he wiped the traces of her feeling from her face, with a trembling, but reviving confidence in the safety of her brother, and the protection of her lover.

Frances, having sufficiently recovered her recollection to command herself, now eagerly led the way to the opposite room, to communicate to her family the pleasing intelligence which she already conceived so certain.

Dunwoodie followed her reluctantly, and with forebodings of the result; but a few moments brought him into the presence of his relatives, and he summoned all his resolution to meet the trial with firmness.

The salutations of the young men were cordial and frank, and, on the part of Henry Wharton, as collected as if nothing had occurred to disturb his self-possession.

The abhorrence of being, in any manner, auxiliary to the arrest of his friend; the danger to the life of Captain Wharton; and the heart-breaking declarations of Frances, had, however, created an uneasiness in the bosom of Major Dunwoodie, which all his efforts could not conceal. His reception by the rest of the family was kind and sincere, both from old regard, and a remembrance of former obligations, heightened by the anticipations they could not fail to read in the expressive eyes of the blushing girl by his side. After exchanging greetings with every member of the family, Major Dunwoodie beckoned to the sentinel, whom the wary prudence of Captain Lawton had left in charge of the prisoner, to leave the room. Turning to Captain Wharton, he inquired mildly, —

"Tell me, Henry, the circumstances of this disguise, in which Captain Lawton reports you to have been found, and remember — remember — Captain Wharton — your answers are entirely voluntary."

"The disguise was used by me, Major Dunwoodie," replied the English officer, gravely, "to enable me to visit my friends, without incurring the danger of becoming a prisoner of war."

"But you did not wear it, until you saw the troop of Lawton approaching?"

"Oh! no," interrupted Frances, eagerly, forgetting all the circumstances in her anxiety for her brother; "Sarah and myself placed them on him when the dragoons appeared; it was our awkwardness that led to the discovery."

The countenance of Dunwoodie brightened, as turning his eyes in fondness on the speaker, he listened to her explanation.

"Probably some articles of your own," he continued, "which were at hand, and were used on the spur of the moment."

"No," said Wharton, with dignity; "the clothes were worn by me from the city; they were procured for the purpose to which they were applied, and I intended to use them in my return this very day."

The appalled Frances shrunk back from between her brother and lover, where her ardent feelings had carried her, as the whole truth glanced over her mind, and she sunk into a seat, gazing wildly on the young men.

"But the pickets — the party at the Plains?" added Dunwoodie, turning pale.

"I passed them, too, in disguise. I made use of this pass, for which I paid; and, as it bears the name of Washington, I presume it is forged."

Dunwoodie caught the paper from his hand, eagerly, and stood gazing on the signature for some time in silence, during which the soldier gradually prevailed over the man; when he turned to the prisoner, with a searching look, as he asked, —

"Captain Wharton, whence did you procure this paper?"

"That is a question, I conceive, Major Dunwoodie has no right to ask."

"Your pardon, sir; my feelings may have led me into an impropriety."

Mr. Wharton, who had been a deeply interested auditor, now so far conquered his feelings as to say, "Surely, Major Dunwoodie, the paper cannot be material; such artifices are used daily in war."

"This name is no counterfeit," said the dragoon, studying the characters, and speaking in a low voice: "is treason yet among us undiscovered? The confidence of Washington has been abused, for the fictitious name is in a different hand from the pass. Captain Wharton, my duty

will not suffer me to grant you a parole: you must accompany me to the Highlands."

"I did not expect otherwise, Major Dunwoodie."

Dunwoodie turned slowly towards the sisters, when the figure of Frances once more arrested his gaze. She had risen from her seat, and stood again with her hands clasped before him in an attitude of petition: feeling himself unable to contend longer with his feelings, he made a hurried excuse for a temporary absence, and left the room. Frances followed him, and, obedient to the direction of her eye, the soldier reëntered the apartment in which had been their first interview.

"Major Dunwoodie," said Frances, in a voice barely audible, as she beckoned to him to be seated; her cheek, which had been of a chilling whiteness, was flushed with a suffusion that crimsoned her whole countenance; she struggled with herself for a moment, and continued, "I have already acknowledged to you my esteem; even now, when you most painfully distress me, I wish not to conceal it. Believe me, Henry is innocent of everything but imprudence. Our country can sustain no wrong." Again she paused, and almost gasped for breath; her color changed rapidly from red to white, until the blood rushed into her face, covering her features with the brightest vermilion; and she added hastily, in an undertone, "I have promised, Dunwoodie, when peace shall be restored to our country, to become your wife; give to my brother his liberty on parole, and I will this day go with you to the altar, follow you to the camp, and, in becoming a soldier's bride, learn to endure a soldier's privations."

Dunwoodie seized the hand which the blushing girl, in her ardor, had extended towards him, and pressed it for a moment to his bosom; then rising from his seat, he paced the room in excessive agitation.

"Frances, say no more, I conjure you, unless you wish to break my heart."

"You then reject my offered hand?" she said, rising with dignity, though her pale cheek and quivering lip plainly showed the conflicting passions within.

"Reject it! Have I not sought it with entreaties — with tears? Has it not been the goal of all my earthly wishes? But to take it under such conditions would be to dishonor both. We will hope for better things. Henry must be acquitted; perhaps not tried. No intercession of mine shall be wanting, you must well know; and believe me, Frances, I am not without favor with Washington."

"That very paper, that abuse of his confidence, to which you alluded, will steel him to my brother's case. If threats or entreaties could move his stern sense of justice, would André have suffered?" As Frances uttered these words she fled from the room in despair.

Dunwoodie remained for a minute nearly stupefied; and then he followed with a view to vindicate himself, and to relieve her apprehensions. On entering the hall that divided the two parlors, he was met by a small ragged boy, who looked one moment at his dress, and placing a piece of paper in his hands, immediately vanished through the outer door of the building. The bewildered state of his mind, and the suddenness of the occurrence, gave the major barely time to observe the messenger to be a country lad, meanly attired, and that he held in his hand one of those toys which are to be bought in cities, and which he now apparently contemplated with the conscious pleasure of having fairly purchased, by the performance of the service required. The soldier turned his eyes to the subject of the note. It was written on a piece of torn and soiled paper, and in a hand barely legible; but, after some little labor, he was able to make out as follows: —

"The rig'lars are at hand, horse and foot." [1]

1 There died a few years since, in Bedford, West-Chester, a yeoman named Elisha H——. This person was employed by Washington as one of his most confidential spies. By the conditions of their bargain, H—— was never to be required to deal with third parties, since his risks were too imminent. He was allowed to enter also into the service of Sir Henry Clinton; and so much confidence had Washington in his love of country and discretion, that he was often intrusted with the minor military movements, in order that he might enhance his value with the English general, by communicating them. In this manner, H—— had continued to serve for a long period, when chance brought him into the city (then held by the British) at a moment when an expedition was about to quit it, to go against a small post established at Bedford, his

Dunwoodie started; and, forgetting everything but the duties of a soldier, he precipitately left the house. While walking rapidly towards the troops, he noticed on a distant hill a vidette riding with speed: several pistols were fired in quick succession; and the next instant the trumpets of the corps rang in his ears with the enlivening strain of "To arms!" By the time he had reached the ground occupied by his squadron, the major saw that every man was in active motion. Lawton was already in the saddle, eying the opposite extremity of the valley with the eagerness of expectation, and crying to the musicians, in tones but little lower than their own,—

"Sound away, my lads, and let these Englishmen know

native village, where the Americans had a depot of provisions. H—— easily ascertained the force and destination of the detachment ordered on this service, but he was at a loss in what manner to communicate his information to the officer in command at Bedford, without betraying his own true character to a third person. There was not time to reach Washington, and under the circumstances, he finally resolved to hazard a short note to the American commandant, stating the danger, and naming the time when the attack might be expected. To this note he even ventured to affix his own initials, E. H., though he had disguised the hand, under a belief that, as he knew himself to be suspected by his countrymen, it might serve to give more weight to his warning. His family being at Bedford, the note was transmitted with facility, and arrived in good season, H—— himself remaining in New York.

The American commandant did what every sensible officer, in a similar case, would have done. He sent a courier with the note to Washington, demanding orders, while he prepared his little party to make the best defense in his power.

The headquarters of the American army were, at that time, in the Highlands. Fortunately, the express met Washington, on a tour of observation near their entrance. The note was given to him, and he read it in the saddle; adding, in pencil, "Believe all that E. H. tells you. George Washington." He returned it to the courier, with an injunction to ride for life or death.

The courier reached Bedford after the British had made their attack. The commandant read the reply, and put it in his pocket. The Americans were defeated, and their leader killed. The note of H——, with the line written on it by Washington, was found on his person.

The following day H—— was summoned to the presence of Sir Henry Clinton. After the latter had put several general questions, he suddenly gave the note to the spy, and asked if he knew the handwriting, and demanded who the E. H. was. "It is Elijah Hadden, the spy you hanged yesterday, at Powles Hook." The readiness of this answer, connected with the fact that a spy having the same initials had been executed the day before, and the coolness of H——, saved him. Sir Henry Clinton allowed him to quit his presence, and he never saw him afterwards.

that the Virginia horse are between them and the end of their journey."

The videttes and patrols now came pouring in, each making in succession his hasty report to the commanding officer, who gave his orders coolly, and with a promptitude that made obedience certain. Once only, as he wheeled his horse to ride over the ground in front, did Dunwoodie trust himself with a look at the cottage, and his heart beat with unusual rapidity as he saw a female figure standing, with clasped hands, at a window of the room in which he had met Frances. The distance was too great to distinguish her features, but the soldier could not doubt that it was his mistress. The paleness of his cheek and the languor of his eye endured but for a moment longer. As he rode towards the intended battle-ground, a flush of ardor began to show itself on his sun-burnt features; and his dragoons, who studied the face of their leader, as the best index to their own fate, saw again the wonted flashing of the eyes, and the cheerful animation, which they had so often witnessed on the eve of battle. By the additions of the videttes and parties that had been out, and which now had all joined, the whole number of the horse was increased to nearly two hundred. There was also a small body of men, whose ordinary duties were those of guides, but who, in cases of emergency, were embodied and did duty as foot-soldiers; these were dismounted, and proceeded, by the order of Dunwoodie, to level the few fences which might interfere with the intended movements of the cavalry. The neglect of husbandry, which had been occasioned by the war, left this task comparatively easy. Those long lines of heavy and durable walls, which now sweep through every part of the country, forty years ago were unknown. The slight and tottering fences of stone were then used more to clear the land for the purposes of cultivation than as permanent barriers, and required the constant attention of the husbandman, to preserve them against the fury of the tempests and the frosts of winter. Some few of them had been built with more care immediately around the dwelling of Mr. Wharton; but those which had intersected the vale below were now generally a pile of

ruins, over which the horses of the Virginians would bound with the fleetness of the wind. Occasionally a short line yet preserved its erect appearance; but as none of these crossed the ground on which Dunwoodie intended to act, there remained only the slighter fences of rails to be thrown down. Their duty was hastily but effectually performed; and the guides withdrew to the post assigned to them for the approaching fight.

Major Dunwoodie had received from his scouts all the intelligence concerning his foe, which was necessary to enable him to make his arrangements. The bottom of the valley was an even plain, that fell with a slight inclination from the foot of the hills on either side, to the level of a natural meadow that wound through the country on the banks of a small stream, by whose waters it was often inundated and fertilized. This brook was easily forded in any part of its course; and the only impediment it offered to the movements of the horse, was in a place where it changed its bed from the western to the eastern side of the valley, and where its banks were more steep and difficult of access than common. Here the highway crossed it by a rough wooden bridge, as it did again at the distance of half a mile above the Locusts.

The hills on the eastern side of the valley were abrupt, and frequently obtruded themselves in rocky prominences into its bosom, lessening the width to half the usual dimensions. One of these projections was but a short distance in the rear of the squadron of dragoons, and Dunwoodie directed Captain Lawton to withdraw, with two troops, behind its cover. The officer obeyed with a kind of surly reluctance, that was, however, somewhat lessened by the anticipations of the effect his sudden appearance would make on the enemy. Dunwoodie knew his man, and had selected the captain for this service, both because he feared his precipitation in the field, and knew, when needed, his support would never fail to appear. It was only in front of the enemy that Captain Lawton was hasty; at all other times his discernment and self-possession were consummately preserved; but he sometimes forgot them in his eagerness to

engage. On the left of the ground on which Dunwoodie intended to meet his foe, was a close wood, which skirted that side of the valley for the distance of a mile. Into this, then, the guides retired, and took their station near its edge, in such a manner as would enable them to maintain a scattering, but effectual fire, on the advancing column of the enemy.

It cannot be supposed that all these preparations were made unheeded by the inmates of the cottage; on the contrary, every feeling which can agitate the human breast, in witnessing such a scene, was actively alive. Mr. Wharton alone saw no hopes to himself in the termination of the conflict. If the British should prevail, his son would be liberated; but what would then be his own fate! He had hitherto preserved his neutral character in the midst of trying circumstances. The fact of his having a son in the royal, or, as it was called, the regular army, had very nearly brought his estates to the hammer. Nothing had obviated this result, but the powerful interest of the relation who held a high political rank in the State, and his own vigilant prudence. In his heart, he was a devoted loyalist; and when the blushing Frances had communicated to him the wishes of her lover, on their return from the American camp the preceding spring, the consent he had given to her future union with a rebel, was as much extracted by the increasing necessity which existed for his obtaining republican support, as by any considerations for the happiness of his child. Should his son now be rescued, he would, in the public mind, be united with him as a plotter against the freedom of the States; and should he remain a captive, and undergo the impending trial, the consequences might be still more dreadful. Much as he loved his wealth, Mr. Wharton loved his children better; and he sat gazing on the movements without, with a listless vacancy in his countenance, that fully denoted his imbecility of character.

Far different were the feelings of the son. Captain Wharton had been left in the keeping of two dragoons, one of whom marched to and fro on the piazza with a measured tread, and the other had been directed to con-

tinue in the same apartment with his prisoner. The young man had witnessed all the movements of Dunwoodie with admiration mingled with fearful anticipations of the consequences to his friends. He particularly disliked the ambush of the detachment under Lawton, who could be distinctly seen from the windows of the cottage, cooling his impatience, by pacing on foot the ground in front of his men. Henry Wharton threw several hasty and inquiring glances around, to see if no means of liberation would offer, but invariably found the eyes of his sentinel fixed on him with the watchfulness of an Argus. He longed, with the ardor of youth, to join in the glorious fray, but was compelled to remain a dissatisfied spectator of a scene in which he would so cheerfully have been an actor. Miss Peyton and Sarah continued gazing on the preparations with varied emotions, in which concern for the fate of the captain formed the most prominent feeling, until the moment the shedding of blood seemed approaching, when, with the timidity of their sex, they sought the retirement of an inner room. Not so Frances: she returned to the apartment where she had left Dunwoodie, and, from one of its windows, had been a deeply interested spectator of all his movements. The wheelings of the troops, the deadly preparations, had all been unnoticed; she saw her lover only, and with mingled emotions of admiration and dread that nearly chilled her. At one moment the blood rushed to her heart, as she saw the young warrior riding through his ranks, giving life and courage to all whom he addressed; and the next, it curdled with the thought that the very gallantry she so much valued might prove the means of placing the grave between her and the object of her regard. Frances gazed until she could look no longer.

In a field on the left of the cottage, and at a short distance in the rear of the troops, was a small group, whose occupation seemed to differ from that of all around them. They were in number only three, being two men and a mulatto boy. The principal personage of this party was a man, whose leanness made his really tall stature appear excessive. He wore spectacles — was unarmed, had dis-

mounted, and seemed to be dividing his attention between a cigar, a book, and the incidents of the field before him. To this party Frances determined to send a note, directed to Dunwoodie. She wrote hastily, with a pencil, "Come to me, Peyton, if it be but for a moment;" and Cæsar emerged from the cellar kitchen, taking the precaution to go by the rear of the building, to avoid the sentinel on the piazza, who had very cavalierly ordered all the family to remain housed. The black delivered the note to the gentleman, with a request that it might be forwarded to Major Dunwoodie. It was the surgeon of the horse to whom Cæsar addressed himself; and the teeth of the African chattered, as he saw displayed upon the ground the several instruments which were in preparation for the anticipated operations. The doctor himself seemed to view the arrangement with great satisfaction, as he deliberately raised his eyes from his book to order the boy to convey the note to his commanding officer, and then dropping them quietly on the page, he continued his occupation. Cæsar was slowly retiring, as the third personage, who by his dress might be an inferior assistant of the surgical department, coolly inquired "if he would have a leg taken off?" This question seemed to remind the black of the existence of those limbs; for he made such use of them as to reach the piazza at the same instant that Major Dunwoodie rode up, at half speed. The brawny sentinel squared himself, and poised his sword with military precision, as he stood on his post, while his officer passed; but no sooner had the door closed, than, turning to the negro, he said, sharply, —

"Harkee, blackey, if you quit the house again without my knowledge, I shall turn barber, and shave off one of those ebony ears with this razor."

Thus assailed in another member, Cæsar hastily retreated into his kitchen, muttering something, in which the words "Skinner," and "rebel rascal," formed a principal part of speech.

"Major Dunwoodie," said Frances to her lover as he entered, "I may have done you injustice; if I have appeared harsh" —

The emotions of the agitated girl prevailed, and she burst into tears.

"Frances," cried the soldier with warmth, "you are never harsh, never unjust, but when you doubt my love."

"Ah! Dunwoodie," added the sobbing girl, "you are about to risk your life in battle; remember that there is one heart whose happiness is built on your safety; brave I know you are; be prudent"—

"For your sake?" inquired the delighted youth.

"For my sake," replied Frances, in a voice barely audible, and dropping on his bosom.

Dunwoodie folded her to his heart, and was about to speak, as a trumpet sounded in the southern end of the vale. Imprinting one long kiss of affection on her unresisting lips, the soldier tore himself from his mistress, and hastened to the scene of strife.

Frances threw herself on a sofa, buried her head under its cushion, and with her shawl drawn over her face, to exclude as much of sound as possible, continued there until the shouts of the combatants, the rattling of the fire-arms, and the thundering tread of the horses, had ceased.

CHAPTER VII.

The game's afoot;
Follow your spirit.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE rough and unimproved face of the country, the frequency of covers, together with the great distance from their own country, and the facilities afforded them for rapid movements to the different points of the war, by the undisputed command of the ocean, had united to deter the English from employing a heavy force in cavalry, in their early efforts to subdue the revolted colonies.

Only one regiment of regular horse was sent from the mother country, during the struggle. But legions and independent corps were formed in different places, as it best accorded with the views of the royal commanders, or suited the exigency of the times. These were not unfrequently composed of men raised in the colonies, and at other times drafts were had from the regiments of the line, and the soldier was made to lay aside the musket and bayonet, and taught to wield the sabre and carabine. One particular body of the subsidiary troops was included in this arrangement, and the Hessian yagers were transformed into a corps of heavy and inactive horse.

Opposed to them were the hardiest spirits of America. Most of the cavalry regiments of the continental army were led and officered by gentlemen from the South. The high and haughty courage of the commanders had communicated itself to the privates, who were men selected with care and great attention to the service they were intended to perform.

While the British were confined to their empty conquests in the possession of a few of the larger towns, or marched through counties that were swept of everything like mili-

tary supplies, the light troops of their enemies had the range of the whole interior.

The sufferings of the line of the American army were great beyond example; but possessing the power, and feeling themselves engaged in a cause which justified severity, the cavalry officers were vigilant in providing for their wants, and the horse were well mounted, well fed, and consequently eminently effective. Perhaps the world could not furnish more brave, enterprising, and resistless corps of light cavalry, than a few that were in the continental service at the time of which we write.

Dunwoodie's men had often tried their prowess against the enemy, and they now sat panting to be led once more against foes whom they seldom charged in vain. Their wishes were soon to be gratified; for their commander had scarcely time to regain his seat in the saddle, before a body of the enemy came sweeping round the base of the hill, which intersected the view to the south. A few minutes enabled the major to distinguish their character. In one troop he saw the green coats of the Cow-Boys, and in the other the leathern helmets and wooden saddles of the yagers. Their numbers were about equal to the body under his immediate orders.

On reaching the open space near the cottage of Harvey Birch, the enemy halted and drew up his men in line, evidently making preparations for a charge. At this moment a column of foot appeared in the vale, and pressed forward to the bank of the brook we have already mentioned.

Major Dunwoodie was not less distinguished by coolness and judgment, than, where occasion offered, by his dauntless intrepidity. He at once saw his advantage, and determined to profit by it. The column he led began slowly to retire from the field, when the youthful German, who commanded the enemy's horse, fearful of missing an easy conquest, gave the word to charge. Few troops were more hardy than the Cow-Boys; they sprang eagerly forward in the pursuit, with a confidence created by the retiring foe and the column in their rear; the Hessians followed more slowly, but in better order. The trumpets of the Virginians now sounded

long and lively; they were answered by a strain from the party in ambush that went to the hearts of their enemies. The column of Dunwoodie wheeled in perfect order, opened and, as the word to charge was given, the troops of Lawton emerged from their cover, with their leader in advance, waving his sabre over his head, and shouting, in a voice that was heard above the clangor of the martial music.

The charge threatened too much for the refugee troop. They scattered in every direction, flying from the field as fast as their horses, the chosen beasts of West-Chester, could carry them. Only a few were hurt: but such as did meet the arms of their avenging countrymen never survived the blow, to tell who struck it. It was upon the poor vassals of the German tyrant that the shock fell. Disciplined to the most exact obedience, these ill-fated men met the charge bravely, but they were swept before the mettled horses and nervous arms of their antagonists like chaff before the wind. Many of them were literally ridden down, and Dunwoodie soon saw the field without an opposing foe. The proximity of the infantry prevented pursuit, and behind its column the few Hessians who escaped unhurt sought protection.

The more cunning refugees dispersed in small bands, taking various and devious routes back to their old station in front of Harlaem. Many was the sufferer, in cattle, furniture, and person, that was created by this rout; for the dispersion of a troop of Cow-Boys was only the extension of an evil.

Such a scene could not be expected to be acted so near them, and the inmates of the cottage take no interest in the result. In truth, the feelings it excited pervaded every bosom, from the kitchen to the parlor. Terror and horror had prevented the ladies from being spectators, but they did not feel the less. Frances continued lying in the posture we have mentioned, offering up fervent and incoherent petitions for the safety of her countrymen, although in her inmost heart she had personified her nation by the graceful image of Peyton Dunwoodie. Her aunt and sister were less exclusive in their devotions; but Sarah began to feel, as the horrors of war were thus brought home to her senses, less pleasure in her anticipated triumphs.

The inmates of Mr. Wharton's kitchen were four, namely, Cæsar and his spouse, their granddaughter, a jet-black damsel of twenty, and the boy before alluded to. The blacks were the remnants of a race of negroes which had been entailed on his estate from Mr. Wharton's maternal ancestors, who were descended from the early Dutch colonists. Time, depravity, and death had reduced them to this small number: and the boy, who was white, had been added by Miss Peyton to the establishment, as an assistant, to perform the ordinary services of a footman. Cæsar, after first using the precaution to place himself under the cover of an angle in the wall, for a screen against any roving bullet which might be traversing the air, became an amused spectator of the skirmish. The sentinel on the piazza was at the distance of but a few feet from him, and he entered into the spirit of the chase with all the ardor of a tried blood-hound: he noticed the approach of the black, and his judicious position, with a smile of contempt, as he squared himself towards the enemy, offering his unprotected breast to any dangers which might come.

After considering the arrangement of Cæsar, for a moment, with ineffable disdain, the dragoon said, with great coolness, —

"You seem very careful of that beautiful person of yours, Mr. Blueskin."

"A bullet hurt a colored man as much as a white," muttered the black, surlily, casting a glance of much satisfaction at his rampart.

"Suppose I make the experiment," returned the sentinel: as he spoke, he deliberately drew a pistol from his belt, and leveled it at the black. Cæsar's teeth chattered at the appearance of the dragoon, although he believed nothing serious was intended. At this moment the column of Dunwoodie began to retire, and the royal cavalry commenced their charge.

"There, Mister Light-Horseman," said Cæsar eagerly, who believed the Americans were retiring in earnest; "why you rebels don't fight — see — see how King George's men make Major Dunwoodie run! Good gentleman, too, but he don't like to fight a rig'lar."

"Damn your regulars," cried the other, fiercely: "wait a minute, blackey, and you'll see Captain Jack Lawton come out from behind yonder hill, and scatter these Cow-Boys like wild geese who've lost their leader."

Cæsar supposed the party under Lawton to have sought the shelter of the hill from motives similar to that which had induced him to place the wall between himself and the battle-ground; but the fact soon verified the trooper's prophecy, and the black witnessed with consternation the total rout of the royal horse.

The sentinel manifested his exultation at the success of his comrades with loud shouts, which soon brought his companion, who had been left in the more immediate charge of Henry Wharton, to the open window of the parlor.

"See, Tom, see," cried the delighted trooper, "how Captain Lawton makes that Hessian's leather cap fly; and now the major has killed the officer's horse — zounds, why didn't he kill the Dutchman, and save the horse?"

A few pistols were discharged at the flying Cow-Boys, and a spent bullet broke a pane of glass within a few feet of Cæsar. Imitating the posture of the great tempter of our race, the black sought the protection of the inside of the building, and immediately ascended to the parlor.

The lawn in front of the Locusts was hidden from the view of the road by a close line of shrubbery, and the horses of the two dragoons had been left, linked together, under its shelter, to await the movements of their masters.

At this moment two Cow-Boys, who had been cut off from a retreat to their own party, rode furiously through the gate, with an intention of escaping to the open wood in the rear of the cottage.

The victorious Americans pressed the retreating Germans until they had driven them under the protection of the fire of the infantry; and feeling themselves, in the privacy of the lawn, relieved from any immediate danger, the predatory warriors yielded to a temptation that few of the corps were ever known to resist — opportunity and horseflesh. With a hardihood and presence of mind that could only exist from long practice in similar scenes, they made towards their in-

tended prizes, by an almost spontaneous movement. They were busily engaged in separating the fastenings of the horses, when the trooper on the piazza discharged his pistols, and rushed, sword in hand, to the rescue.

The entrance of Cæsar into the parlor had induced the wary dragoon within to turn his attention more closely on his prisoner; but this new interruption drew him again to the window. He threw his body out of the building, and with dreadful imprecations endeavored, by his threats and appearance, to frighten the marauders from their prey. The moment was enticing. Three hundred of his comrades were within a mile of the cottage; unridden horses were running at large in every direction, and Henry Wharton seized the unconscious sentinel by his legs, and threw him headlong into the lawn. Cæsar vanished from the room, and drew a bolt of the outer door.

The fall of the soldier was not great, and recovering his feet, he turned his fury for a moment on his prisoner. To scale the window in the face of such an enemy, was, however, impossible, and on trial he found the main entrance barred.

His comrade now called loudly upon him for aid, and forgetful of everything else, the discomfited trooper rushed to his assistance. One horse was instantly liberated, but the other was already fastened to the saddle of a Cow-Boy, and the four retired behind the building, cutting furiously at each other with their sabres, and making the air resound with their imprecations. Cæsar threw the outer door open, and pointing to the remaining horse, that was quietly biting the faded herbage of the lawn, he exclaimed, —

"Run — now — run — Massa Harry, run."

"Yes," cried the youth as he vaulted into the saddle, "now, indeed, my honest fellow, is the time to run." He beckoned hastily to his father, who stood at the window in speechless anxiety, with his hands extended towards his child in the attitude of benediction, and adding, "God bless you, Cæsar, salute the girls," he dashed through the gate, with the rapidity of lightning.

The African watched him with anxiety as he gained the

highway, saw him incline to the right, and riding furiously under the brow of some rocks, which on that side rose perpendicularly, disappear behind a projection, which soon hid him from view.

The delighted Cæsar closed the door, pushing bolt after bolt, and turning the key until it would turn no more, soliloquizing the whole time on the happy escape of his young master.

"How well he ride — teach him good deal myself — salute a young lady — Miss Fanny wouldn't let old colored man kiss a red cheek."

When the fortune of the day was decided, and the time arrived for the burial of the dead, two Cow-Boys and a Virginian were found in the rear of the Locusts, to be included in the number.

Happily for Henry Wharton, the searching eyes of his captor were examining, through a pocket-glass, the column of infantry that still held its position on the bank of the stream, while the remnants of the Hessian yagers were seeking its friendly protection. His horse was of the best blood of Virginia, and carried him with the swiftness of the wind along the valley; and the heart of the youth was already beating tumultuously with pleasure at his deliverance, when a well-known voice reached his startled ear, crying aloud, —

"Bravely done, captain! Don't spare the whip, and turn to your left before you cross the brook."

Wharton turned his head in surprise, and saw, sitting on the point of a jutting rock that commanded a bird's-eye view of the valley, his former guide, Harvey Birch. His pack, much diminished in size, lay at the feet of the pedler, who waved his hat to the youth, exultingly, as the latter flew by him. The English captain took the advice of this mysterious being, and finding a good road, which led to the highway that intersected the valley, turned down its direction, and was soon opposite to his friends. The next minute he crossed the bridge, and stopped his charger before his old acquaintance, Colonel Wellmere.

"Captain Wharton!" exclaimed the astonished com-

mander of the English troops, "dressed in mohair, and mounted on a rebel dragoon horse! are you from the clouds in this attire, and in such a style?"

"Thank God!" cried the youth, recovering his breath, "I am safe, and have escaped from the hands of my enemies; but five minutes since and I was a prisoner, and threatened with the gallows."

"The gallows, Captain Wharton! surely those traitors to the king would never dare to commit another murder in cold blood; is it not enough that they took the life of André? wherefore did they threaten you with a similar fate?"

"Under the pretense of a similar offense," said the captain, briefly explaining to the group of listeners the manner of his capture, the grounds of his personal apprehensions, and the method of his escape. By the time he had concluded his narration, the fugitive Germans were collected in the rear of the column of infantry, and Colonel Wellmere cried aloud,—

"From my soul I congratulate you, my brave friend; mercy is a quality with which these traitors are unacquainted, and you are doubly fortunate in escaping from their hands uninjured. Prepare yourself to grant me your assistance, and I will soon afford you a noble revenge."

"I do not think there was danger of personal outrage to any man, Colonel Wellmere, from a party that Major Dunwoodie commands," returned young Wharton, with a slight glow on his face: "his character is above the imputation of such an offense; neither do I think it altogether prudent to cross this brook into the open plain, in the face of those Virginian horse, flushed as they must be with the success they have just obtained."

"Do you call the rout of those irregulars and these sluggish Hessians a deed to boast of?" said the other with a contemptuous smile: "you speak of the affair, Captain Wharton, as if your boasted Mr. Dunwoodie, for major he is none, had discomfited the body guards of your king."

"And I must be allowed to say, Colonel Wellmere, that if the body guards of my king were in yon field, they would

meet a foe that it would be dangerous to despise. Sir, my boasted Mr. Dunwoodie is the pride of Washington's army as a cavalry officer," cried Henry with warmth.

"Dunwoodie, Dunwoodie!" repeated the colonel slowly; "surely I have met the gentleman before."

"I have been told you once saw him for a moment, at the town residence of my sisters," replied Wharton, with a lurking smile.

"Ah! I do remember me of such a youth; and does the most potent congress of these rebellious colonies intrust their soldiers to the leading of such a warrior!"

"Ask the commander of yon Hessian horse, whether he thinks Major Dunwoodie worthy of the confidence."

Colonel Wellmere was far from wanting that kind of pride which makes a man bear himself bravely in the presence of his enemies. He had served in America a long time, without ever meeting with any but new raised levies, or the militia of the country. These would sometimes fight, and that fearlessly, but they as often chose to run away without pulling a trigger. He was too apt to judge from externals, and thought it impossible for men whose gaiters were so clean, whose tread so regular, and who wheeled with so much accuracy, to be beaten. In addition to all these, they were Englishmen, and their success was certain. Colonel Wellmere had never been kept much in the field, or these notions, which he had brought with him from home, and which had been greatly increased by the vaporing of a garrisoned town, would have long since vanished. He listened to the warm reply of Captain Wharton with a supercilious smile, and then inquired, —

"You would not have us retire, sir, before these boasted horsemen, without doing something that may deprive them of part of the glory which you appear to think they have gained!"

"I would have you advised, Colonel Wellmere, of the danger you are about to encounter."

"Danger is but an unseemly word for a soldier," continued the British commander with a sneer.

"And one as little dreaded by the 60th as any corps who

wear the royal livery," cried Henry Wharton, fiercely; "give but the word to charge, and let our actions speak."

"Now again I know my young friend," said Wellmere, soothingly; "but if you have anything to say before we fight, that can in any manner help us in our attack, we'll listen. You know the force of the rebels; are there more of them in ambush?"

"Yes," replied the youth, chafing still under the other's sneers, "in the skirt of this wood on our right are a small party of foot: their horse are all before you."

"Where they will not continue long," cried Wellmere, turning to the few officers around him. "Gentlemen, we will cross the stream in column, and display on the plain beyond, or else we shall not be able to entice these valiant Yankees within the reach of our muskets. Captain Wharton, I claim your assistance as an aide-de-camp."

The youth shook his head in disapprobation of a movement which his good sense taught him was rash, but prepared with alacrity to perform his duty in the impending trial.

During this conversation, which was held at a small distance in advance of the British column, and in full view of the Americans, Dunwoodie had been collecting his scattered troops, securing his few prisoners, and retiring to the ground where he had been posted at the first appearance of his enemy. Satisfied with the success he had already obtained, and believing the English too wary to give him an opportunity of harassing them further, he was about to withdraw the guides; and, leaving a strong party on the ground to watch the movements of the regulars, to fall back a few miles, to a favorable place for taking up his quarters for the night. Captain Lawton was reluctantly listening to the reasoning of his commander, and had brought out his favorite glass, to see if no opening could be found for an advantageous attack, when he suddenly exclaimed, —

"How's this! a blue coat among those scarlet gentry? As I hope to live to see old Virginia, it is my masquerading friend of the 60th, the handsome Captain Wharton, escaped from two of my best men!"

He had not done speaking when the survivor of these heroes joined his troop, bringing with him his own horse and those of the Cow-Boys; he reported the death of his comrade, and the escape of his prisoner. As the deceased was the immediate sentinel over the person of young Wharton, and the other was not to be blamed for defending the horses, which were more particularly under his care, his captain heard him with uneasiness but without anger.

This intelligence made an entire change in the views of Major Dunwoodie. He saw at once that his own reputation was involved in the escape of his prisoner. The order to recall the guides was countermanded, and he now joined his second in command, watching as eagerly as the impetuous Lawton himself, for some opening to assail his foe to advantage.

But two hours before, and Dunwoodie had felt the chance which made Henry Wharton his captive, as the severest blow he had ever sustained. Now he panted for an opportunity in which, by risking his own life, he might recapture his friend. All other considerations were lost in the goadings of a wounded spirit, and he might have soon emulated Lawton in hardihood, had not Wellmere and his troops at this moment crossed the brook into the open plain.

"There," cried the delighted captain, as he pointed out the movement with his finger, "there comes John Bull into the mousetrap, and with eyes wide open."

"Surely," said Dunwoodie, eagerly, "he will not display his column on that flat: Wharton must tell him of the ambush. But if he does" —

"We will not leave him a dozen sound skins in his battalion," interrupted the other, springing into his saddle.

The truth was soon apparent; for the English column, after advancing for a short distance on the level land, displayed with an accuracy that would have done them honor on a field-day in their own Hyde Park.

"Prepare to mount — mount!" cried Dunwoodie; the last word being repeated by Lawton in a tone that rang in the ears of Cæsar, who stood at the open window of the cottage. The black recoiled in dismay, having lost all his

confidence in Captain Lawton's timidity; for he thought he yet saw him emerging from his cover and waving his sword on high.

As the British line advanced slowly and in exact order, the guides opened a galling fire. It began to annoy that part of the royal troops which was nearest to them. Wellmere listened to the advice of the veteran who was next to him in rank, and ordered two companies to dislodge the American foot from their hiding-place. The movement created a slight confusion; and Dunwoodie seized the opportunity to charge. No ground could be more favorable for the manœuvres of horse, and the attack of the Virginians was irresistible. It was aimed chiefly at the bank opposite to the wood, in order to clear the Americans from the fire of their friends who were concealed; and it was completely successful. Wellmere, who was on the left of his line, was overthrown by the impetuous fury of his assailants. Dunwoodie was in time to save him from the impending blow of one of his men, and raised him from the ground, had him placed on a horse, and delivered to the custody of his orderly. The officer who had suggested the attack upon the guides had been intrusted with its execution, but the menace was sufficient for these irregulars. In fact, their duty was performed, and they retired along the skirt of the wood, with intent to regain their horses, which had been left under a guard at the upper end of the valley.

The left of the British line was outflanked by the Americans, who doubled in their rear, and thus made the rout in that quarter total. But the second in command, perceiving how the battle went, promptly wheeled his party, and threw in a heavy fire on the dragoons, as they passed him to the charge; with this party was Henry Wharton, who had volunteered to assist in dispersing the guides: a ball struck his bridle-arm, and compelled him to change hands. As the dragoons dashed by them, rending the air with their shouts, and with trumpets sounding a lively strain, the charger ridden by the youth became ungovernable — he plunged, reared, and his rider being unable,

with his wounded arm, to manage the impatient animal, Henry Wharton found himself, in less than a minute, unwillingly riding by the side of Captain Lawton. The dragoon comprehended at a glance the ludicrous situation of his new comrade, but had only time to cry aloud, before they plunged into the English line, —

"The horse knows the righteous cause better than his rider. Captain Wharton, you are welcome to the ranks of freedom."

No time was lost, however, by Lawton, after the charge was completed, in securing his prisoner again; and perceiving him to be hurt, he directed him to be conveyed to the rear.

The Virginian troopers dealt out their favors, with no gentle hands, on that part of the royal foot who were thus left in a great measure at their mercy. Dunwoodie, observing that the remnant of the Hessians had again ventured on the plain, led on in pursuit, and easily overtaking their light and half-fed horses, soon destroyed the remainder of the detachment.

In the mean while, great numbers of the English, taking advantage of the smoke and confusion in the field, were enabled to get in the rear of the body of their countrymen, which still preserved its order in a line parallel to the wood, but which had been obliged to hold its fire, from the fear of injuring friends as well as foes. The fugitives were directed to form a second line within the wood itself, and under cover of the trees. This arrangement was not yet completed, when Captain Lawton called to a youth, who commanded the other troop left with that part of the force which remained on the ground, and proposed charging the unbroken line of the British. The proposal was as promptly accepted as it had been made, and the troops were arrayed for the purpose. The eagerness of their leader prevented the preparations necessary to ensure success, and the horse, receiving a destructive fire as they advanced, were thrown into additional confusion. Both Lawton and his more juvenile comrade fell at this discharge. Fortunately for the credit of the Virginians,

Major Dunwoodie reëntered the field at this critical instant; he saw his troops in disorder; at his feet lay weltering in blood George Singleton, a youth endeared to him by numberless virtues, and Lawton was unhorsed and stretched on the plain. The eye of the youthful warrior flashed fire. Riding between this squadron and the enemy, in a voice that reached the hearts of his dragoons, he recalled them to their duty. His presence and words acted like magic. The clamor of voices ceased; the line was formed promptly and with exactitude; the charge sounded; and, led on by their commander, the Virginians swept across the plain with an impetuosity that nothing could withstand, and the field was instantly cleared of the enemy: those who were not destroyed sought a shelter in the woods. Dunwoodie slowly withdrew from the fire of the English who were covered by the trees, and commenced the painful duty of collecting his dead and wounded.

The sergeant charged with conducting Henry Wharton to a place where he might procure surgical aid, set about performing his duty with alacrity, in order to return as soon as possible to the scene of strife. They had not reached the middle of the plain, before the captain noticed a man whose appearance and occupation forcibly arrested his attention. His head was bald and bare, but a well-powdered wig was to be seen, half-concealed, in the pocket of his breeches. His coat was off, and his arms were naked to the elbow; blood had disfigured much of his dress, and his hands, and even face, bore this mark of his profession; in his mouth was a cigar; in his right hand some instruments of strange formation, and in his left the remnants of an apple, with which he occasionally relieved the duty of the before-mentioned cigar. He was standing, lost in the contemplation of a Hessian, who lay breathless before him. At a little distance were three or four of the guides, leaning on their muskets, and straining their eyes in the direction of the combatants, and at his elbow stood a man who, from the implements in his hand, and his bloody vestments, seemed an assistant.

"There, sir, is the doctor," said the attendant of Henry

very coolly; "he will patch up your arm in the twinkling of an eye;" and beckoning to the guides to approach, he whispered and pointed to his prisoner, and then galloped furiously towards his comrades.

Wharton advanced to the side of this strange figure, and observing himself to be unnoticed, was about to request his assistance, when the other broke silence in a soliloquy:—

"Now, I know this man to have been killed by Captain Lawton, as well as if I had seen him strike the blow. How often have I strove to teach him the manner in which he can disable his adversary, without destroying life! It is cruel thus unnecessarily to cut off the human race, and furthermore, such blows as these render professional assistance unnecessary; it is in a measure treating the lights of science with disrespect."

"If, sir, your leisure will admit," said Henry Wharton, "I must beg your attention to a slight hurt."

"Ah!" cried the other, starting, and examining him from head to foot, "you are from the field below; is there much business there, sir?"

"Indeed," answered Henry, accepting the offer of the surgeon to assist in removing his coat, "'tis a stirring time, I can assure you."

"Stirring!" repeated the surgeon, busily employed with his dressings; "you give me great pleasure, sir; for so long as they can stir there must be life; and while there is life, you know, there is hope; but here my art is of no use. I did put in the brains of one patient, but I rather think the man must have been dead before I saw him. It is a curious case, sir; I will take you to see it — only across the fence there, where you may perceive so many bodies together. Ah! the ball has glanced around the bone without shattering it; you are fortunate in falling into the hands of an old practitioner, or you might have lost this limb."

"Indeed!" said Henry, with a slight uneasiness; "I did not apprehend the injury to be so serious."

"Oh! the hurt is not bad, but you have such a pretty arm for an operation; the pleasure of the thing might have tempted a novice."

"The devil!" cried the captain; "can there be any pleasure in mutilating a fellow-creature?"

"Sir," said the surgeon, with gravity, "a scientific amputation is a very pretty operation, and doubtless might tempt a younger man, in the hurry of business, to overlook all the particulars of the case."

Further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of the dragoons, slowly marching towards their former halting-place, and new applications from the slightly wounded soldiers, who now came riding in, making hasty demands on the skill of the doctor.

The guides took charge of Wharton, and, with a heavy heart, the young man retraced his steps to his father's cottage.

The English had lost in the several charges about one third of their foot, but the remainder were rallied in the wood; and Dunwoodie, perceiving them to be too strongly posted to assail, had left a strong party with Captain Lawton, with orders to watch their motions, and to seize every opportunity to harass them before they reëmbarked.

Intelligence had reached the major of another party being out, by the way of the Hudson, and his duty required that he should hold himself in readiness to defeat the intentions of these also. Captain Lawton received his orders with strong injunctions to make no assault on the foe, unless a favorable chance should offer.

The injury received by this officer was in the head, being stunned by a glancing bullet; and parting with a laughing declaration from the major, that if he again forgot himself, they should all think him more materially hurt, each took his own course.

The British were a light party without baggage, that had been sent out to destroy certain stores, understood to be collecting for the use of the American army. They now retired through the woods to the heights, and, keeping the route along their summits, in places unassailable by cavalry, commenced a retreat to their boats.

CHAPTER VIII.

With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide;
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born infant, died;
But things like these, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

SOUTHEY.

THE last sounds of the combat died on the ears of the anxious listeners in the cottage, and were succeeded by the stillness of suspense. Frances had continued by herself, striving to exclude the uproar, and vainly endeavoring to summon resolution to meet the dreaded result. The ground where the charge on the foot had taken place was but a short mile from the Locusts, and, in the intervals of the musketry, the cries of the soldiers had even reached the ears of its inhabitants. After witnessing the escape of his son, Mr. Wharton had joined his sister and eldest daughter in their retreat, and the three continued fearfully waiting for news from the field. Unable longer to remain under the painful uncertainty of her situation, Frances soon added herself to the uneasy group, and Cæsar was directed to examine into the state of things without, and report on whose banners victory had alighted. The father now briefly related to his astonished children the circumstance and manner of their brother's escape. They were yet in the freshness of their surprise, when the door opened, and Captain Wharton, atttended by a couple of the guides, and followed by the black, stood before them.

"Henry — my son, my son," cried the agitated parent, stretching out his arms, yet unable to rise from his seat; "what is it I see; are you again a captive, and in danger of your life?"

"The better fortune of these rebels has prevailed," said the youth, endeavoring to force a cheerful smile, and taking a hand of each of his distressed sisters. "I strove nobly for my liberty; but the perverse spirit of rebellion has even lighted on their horses. The steed I mounted carried me, greatly against my will, I acknowledge, into the very centre of Dunwoodie's men."

"And you were again captured," continued the father, casting a fearful glance on the armed attendants who had entered the room.

"That, sir, you may safely say; this Mr. Lawton, who sees so far, had me in custody again immediately."

"Why you no hold 'em in, Massa Harry?" cried Cæsar, pettishly.

"That," said Wharton, smiling, "was a thing easier said than done, Mr. Cæsar, especially as these gentlemen" (glancing his eyes at the guides) "had seen proper to deprive me of the use of my better arm."

"Wounded!" exclaimed both sisters in a breath.

"A mere scratch, but disabling me at a most critical moment," continued the brother, kindly, and stretching out the injured limb to manifest the truth of his declaration. Cæsar threw a look of bitter animosity on the irregular warriors who were thought to have had an agency in the deed, and left the room. A few more words sufficed to explain all that Captain Wharton knew relative to the fortune of the day. The result he thought yet doubtful, for when he left the ground, the Virginians were retiring from the field of battle.

"They had tree'd the squirrel," said one of the sentinels abruptly, "and didn't quit the ground without leaving a good hound for the chase when he comes down."

"Aye," added his comrade, dryly, "I'm thinking Captain Lawton will count the noses of what are left before they see their whale-boats."

Frances had stood supporting herself by the back of a chair, during this dialogue, catching, in breathless anxiety, every syllable as it was uttered; her color changed rapidly; her limbs shook under her; until, with desperate resolution, she inquired, —

"Is any officer hurt on — the — on either side?"

"Yes," answered the man, cavalierly, "these southern youths are so full of mettle, that it's seldom we fight but one or two gets knocked over; one of the wounded, who came up before the troops, told me that Captain Singleton was killed, and Major Dunwoodie" —

Frances heard no more, but fell lifeless in the chair behind her. The attention of her friends soon revived her, when the captain, turning to the man, said, fearfully, —

"Surely Major Dunwoodie is unhurt?"

"Never fear him," added the guide, disregarding the agitation of the family; "they say a man who is born to be hanged will never be drowned: if a bullet could kill the major, he would have been dead long ago. I was going to say, that the major is in a sad taking because of the captain's being killed; but had I known how much store the lady set by him, I wouldn't have been so plain-spoken."

Frances now rose quickly from her seat, with cheeks glowing with confusion, and, leaning on her aunt, was about to retire, when Dunwoodie himself appeared. The first emotion of the agitated girl was unalloyed happiness; in the next instant she shrank back appalled from the unusual expression that reigned in his countenance. The sternness of battle yet sat on his brow; his eye was fixed and severe. The smile of affection that used to lighten his dark features on meeting his mistress, was supplanted by the lowering look of care; his whole soul seemed to be absorbed in one engrossing emotion, and he proceeded at once to his object.

"Mr. Wharton," he earnestly began, "in times like these, we need not stand on idle ceremony: one of my officers, I am afraid, is hurt mortally; and, presuming on your hospitality, I have brought him to your door."

"I am happy, sir, that you have done so," said Mr. Wharton, at once perceiving the importance of conciliating the American troops; "the necessitous are always welcome, and doubly so, in being the friend of Major Dunwoodie"

"Sir, I thank you for myself, and in behalf of him who is unable to render you his thanks," returned the other, hastily; "if you please, we will have him conducted where the surgeon may see and report upon his case without delay." To this there could be no objection; and Frances felt a chill at her heart, as her lover withdrew, without casting a solitary look on herself.

There is a devotedness in female love that admits of no rivalry. All the tenderness of the heart, all the powers of the imagination, are enlisted in behalf of the tyrant passion; and where all is given, much is looked for in return. Frances had spent hours of anguish, of torture, on account of Dunwoodie, and he now met her without a smile, and left her without a greeting. The ardor of her feelings was unabated, but the elasticity of her hopes was weakened. As the supporters of the nearly lifeless body of Dunwoodie's friend passed her, in their way to the apartment prepared for his reception, she caught a view of this seeming rival.

His pale and ghastly countenance, sunken eye, and difficult breathing, gave her a glimpse of death in its most fearful form. Dunwoodie was by his side, and held his hand, giving frequent and stern injunctions to the men to proceed with care, and, in short, manifesting all the solicitude that the most tender friendship could, on such an occasion, inspire. Frances moved lightly before them, and, with an averted face, she held open the door for their passage to the bed; it was only as the major touched her garments, on entering the room, that she ventured to raise her mild blue eyes to his face. But the glance was unreturned, and Frances unconsciously sighed as she sought the solitude of her own apartment.

Captain Wharton voluntarily gave a pledge to his keepers not to attempt again escaping, and then proceeded to execute those duties on behalf of his father, which were thought necessary in a host. On entering the passage for that purpose, he met the operator who had so dexterously dressed his arm, advancing to the room of the wounded officer.

"Ah!" cried the disciple of Esculapius, "I see you are doing well; but stop; have you a pin? No! here, I have one; you must keep the cold air from your hurt, or some of the youngsters will be at work at you yet."

"God forbid," muttered the captain, in an undertone, attentively adjusting the bandages, when Dunwoodie appeared at the door, impatiently crying aloud, —

"Hasten, Sitgreaves, hasten; or George Singleton will die from loss of blood."

"What! Singleton! God forbid! Bless me — is it George — poor little George?" exclaimed the surgeon, as he quickened his pace with evident concern, and hastened to the side of the bed; "he is alive, though, and while there is life there is hope. This is the first serious case I have had to-day, where the patient was not already dead. Captain Lawton teaches his men to strike with so little discretion — poor George — bless me, it is a musket bullet."

The youthful sufferer turned his eyes on the man of science, and with a faint smile endeavored to stretch forth his hand. There was an appeal in the look and action that touched the heart of the operator. The surgeon removed his spectacles to wipe an unusual moisture from his eyes, and proceeded carefully to the discharge of his duty. While the previous arrangements were, however, making, he gave vent in some measure to his feelings, by saying, —

"When it is only a bullet, I have always some hopes; there is a chance that it hits nothing vital; but, bless me, Captain Lawton's men cut so at random — generally sever the jugular or the carotid artery, or let out the brains, and all are so difficult to remedy — the patient mostly dying before one can get at him. I never had success but once in replacing a man's brains, although I have tried three this very day. It is easy to tell where Lawton's troop charge in a battle, they cut so at random."

The group around the bed of Captain Singleton were too much accustomed to the manner of their surgeon to regard or to reply to his soliloquy; but they quietly awaited the moment when he was to commence his examination. This now took place, and Dunwoodie stood look-

ing the operator in the face, with an expression that seemed to read his soul. The patient shrunk from the application of the probe, and a smile stole over the features of the surgeon, as he muttered, —

"There has been nothing before it in that quarter." He now applied himself in earnest to his work, took off his spectacles, and threw aside his wig. All this time Dunwoodie stood in feverish silence, holding one of the hands of the sufferer in both his own, watching the countenance of Doctor Sitgreaves. At length Singleton gave a slight groan, and the surgeon rose with alacrity, and said aloud, —

"Ah! there is some pleasure in following a bullet; it may be said to meander through the human body, injuring nothing vital; but as for Captain Lawton's men" —

"Speak," interrupted Dunwoodie; "is there hope? — can you find the ball?"

"It's no difficult matter to find that which one has in his hand, Major Dunwoodie," replied the surgeon, coolly, preparing his dressings. "It took what that literal fellow, Captain Lawton, calls a circumbendibus, a route never taken by the swords of his men, notwithstanding the multiplied pains I have been at to teach him how to cut scientifically. Now, I saw a horse this day with his head half severed from his body."

"That," said Dunwoodie, as the blood rushed to his cheeks again, and his dark eyes sparkled with the rays of hope, "was some of my handiwork; I killed that horse myself."

"You!" exclaimed the surgeon, dropping his dressing in surprise, "you! but you knew it was a horse!"

"I had such suspicions, I own," said the major, smiling, and holding a beverage to the lips of his friend.

"Such blows alighting on the human frame are fatal," continued the doctor, pursuing his business; "they set at nought the benefits which flow from the lights of science; they are useless in a battle, for disabling your foe is all that is required. I have sat, Major Dunwoodie, many a cold hour, while Captain Lawton has been engaged, and after all my expectation, not a single case worth recording has occurred — all scratches or death-

wounds; ah! the sabre is a sad weapon in unskillful hands! Yes, Major Dunwoodie, many are the hours I have thrown away in endeavoring to impress this truth on Captain John Lawton."

The impatient major pointed silently to his friend, and the surgeon quickened his movements.

"Ah! poor George, it is a narrow chance; but" — he was interrupted by a messenger requiring the presence of the commanding officer in the field. Dunwoodie pressed the hand of his friend, and beckoned the doctor to follow him, as he withdrew.

"What think you?" he whispered, on reaching the passage; "will he live?"

"He will."

"Thank God!" cried the youth, hastening below.

Dunwoodie for a moment joined the family, who were now collecting in the ordinary parlor. His face was no longer wanting in smiles, and his salutations, though hasty, were cordial. He took no notice of the escape and recapture of Henry Wharton, but seemed to think the young man had continued where he had left him before the encounter. On the ground they had not met. The English officer withdrew in haughty silence to a window, leaving the major uninterrupted to make his communications.

The excitement produced by the events of the day in the youthful feelings of the sisters, had been succeeded by a languor that kept them both silent, and Dunwoodie held his discourse with Miss Peyton.

"Is there any hope, my cousin, that your friend can survive his wound?" said the lady, advancing towards her kinsman, with a smile of benevolent regard.

"Everything, my dear madam, everything," answered the soldier cheerfully. "Sitgreaves says he will live, and he has never deceived me."

"Your pleasure is not much greater than my own at this intelligence. One so dear to Major Dunwoodie cannot fail to excite an interest in the bosom of his friends."

"Say one so deservedly dear, madam," returned the

major, with warmth: "he is the beneficent spirit of the corps, equally beloved by us all; so mild, so equal, so just, so generous, with the meekness of a lamb and the fondness of a dove — it is only in the hour of battle that Singleton is a lion."

"You speak of him as if he were your mistress, Major Dunwoodie," observed the smiling spinster, glancing her eye at her niece, who sat pale and listening, in a corner of the room.

"I love him as one," cried the excited youth; "but he requires care and nursing; all now depends on the attention he receives."

"Trust me, sir, he will want for nothing under this roof."

"Pardon me, dear madam; you are all that is benevolent, but Singleton requires a care which many men would feel to be irksome. It is at moments like these, and in sufferings like this, that the soldier most finds the want of female tenderness." As he spoke, he turned his eyes on Frances with an expression that again thrilled to the heart of his mistress: she rose from her seat with burning cheeks, and said, —

"All the attention that can with propriety be given to a stranger, will be cheerfully bestowed on your friend."

"Ah!" cried the major, shaking his head, "that cold word propriety will kill him; he must be fostered, cherished, soothed."

"These are offices for a sister or a wife."

"A sister!" repeated the soldier, the blood rushing to his own face tumultuously; "a sister! he has a sister; and one that might be here with to-morrow's sun." He paused, mused in silence, glanced his eyes uneasily at Frances, and muttered in an undertone, "Singleton requires it, and it must be done."

The ladies had watched his varying countenance in some surprise, and Miss Peyton now observed that, —

"If there were a sister of Captain Singleton near them, her presence would be gladly requested both by herself and nieces."

"It must be, madam; it cannot well be otherwise," replied Dunwoodie, with a hesitation that but ill agreed with his former declarations; "she shall be sent for express this very night." And then, as if willing to change the subject, he approached Captain Wharton, and continued, mildly, —

"Henry Wharton, to me honor is dearer than life; but in your hands I know it can safely be confided; remain here unwatched, until we leave the county, which will not be for some days."

The distance in the manner of the English officer vanished, and taking the offered hand of the other, he replied with warmth, "Your generous confidence, Peyton, will not be abused, even though the gibbet on which your Washington hung André be ready for my own execution."

"Henry Henry Wharton," said Dunwoodie reproachfully, "you little know the man who leads our armies, or you would have spared him that reproach; but duty calls me without. I leave you where I could wish to stay myself, and where you cannot be wholly unhappy."

In passing Frances, she received another of those smiling looks of affection she so much prized, and for a season the impression made by his appearance after the battle was forgotten.

Among the veterans that had been impelled by the times to abandon the quiet of age for the service of their country, was Colonel Singleton. He was a native of Georgia, and had been for the earlier years of his life a soldier by profession. When the struggle for liberty commenced, he offered his services to his country, and from respect to his character they had been accepted. His years and health had, however, prevented his discharging the active duties of the field, and he had been kept in command of different posts of trust, where his country might receive the benefits of his vigilance and fidelity without inconvenience to himself. For the last year he had been intrusted with the passes into the Highlands, and was now quartered, with his daughter, but a

short day's march above the valley where Dunwoodie had met the enemy. His only other child was the wounded officer we have mentioned. Thither, then, the major prepared to dispatch a messenger with the unhappy news of the captain's situation, and charged with such an invitation from the ladies as he did not doubt would speedily bring the sister to the couch of her brother.

This duty performed, though with an unwillingness that only could make his former anxiety more perplexing, Dunwoodie proceeded to the field where his troops had halted. The remnant of the English were already to be seen, over the tops of the trees, marching along the heights towards their boats, in compact order and with great watchfulness. The detachment of the dragoons under Lawton were a short distance on their flank, eagerly awaiting a favorable moment to strike a blow. In this manner both parties were soon lost to view.

A short distance above the Locusts was a small hamlet, where several roads intersected each other, and from which, consequently, access to the surrounding country was easy. It was a favorite halting-place of the horse, and frequently held by the light parties of the American army during their excursions below. Dunwoodie had been the first to discover its advantages, and as it was necessary for him to remain in the county until further orders from above, it cannot be supposed he overlooked them now. To this place the troops were directed to retire, carrying with them their wounded; parties were already employed in the sad duty of interring the dead. In making these arrangements, a new object of embarrassment presented itself to our young soldier. In moving through the field, he was struck with the appearance of Colonel Wellmere, seated by himself, brooding over his misfortunes, uninterrupted by anything but the passing civilities of the American officers. His anxiety on behalf of Singleton had hitherto banished the recollection of his captive from the mind of Dunwoodie, and he now approached him with apologies for his neglect. The Englishman received his courtesies with coolness, and

complained of being injured by what he affected to think was the accidental stumbling of his horse. Dunwoodie, who had seen one of his own men ride him down, and that with very little ceremony, slightly smiled, as he offered him surgical assistance. This could only be procured at the cottage, and thither they both proceeded.

"Colonel Wellmere!" cried young Wharton in astonishment as they entered, "has the fortune of war been thus cruel to you also? — but you are welcome to the house of my father, although I could wish the introduction to have taken place under more happy circumstances."

Mr. Wharton received this new guest with the guarded caution that distinguished his manner, and Dunwoodie left the room to seek the bedside of his friend. Everything here looked propitious, and he acquainted the surgeon that another patient waited his skill in the room below. The sound of the word was enough to set the doctor in motion, and seizing his implements of office, he went in quest of this new applicant. At the door of the parlor he was met by the ladies, who were retiring. Miss Peyton detained him for a moment, to inquire into the welfare of Captain Singleton. Frances smiled with something of her natural archness of manner, as she contemplated the grotesque appearance of the bald-headed practitioner; but Sarah was too much agitated, with the surprise of the unexpected interview with the British colonel, to observe him. It has already been intimated that Colonel Wellmere was an old acquaintance of the family. Sarah had been so long absent from the city, that she had in some measure been banished from the remembrance of the gentleman; but the recollections of Sarah were more vivid. There is a period in the life of every woman when she may be said to be predisposed to love; it is at the happy age when infancy is lost in opening maturity — when the guileless heart beats with those anticipations of life which the truth can never realize — and when the imagination forms images of perfection that are copied after its own unsullied visions. At this happy age Sarah left the city, and she had brought with her a picture of futurity, faintly impressed, it is true, but which

gained durability from her solitude, and in which Wellmere had been placed in the foreground. The surprise of the meeting had in some measure overpowered her, and after receiving the salutations of the colonel, she had risen, in compliance with a signal from her observant aunt, to withdraw.

"Then, sir," observed Miss Peyton, after listening to the surgeon's account of his young patient, "we may be flattered with the expectation that he will recover."

"'Tis certain, madam," returned the doctor, endeavoring, out of respect to the ladies, to replace his wig; "'tis certain, with care and good nursing."

"In those he shall not be wanting," said the spinster, mildly. "Everything we have he can command, and Major Dunwoodie has dispatched an express for his sister."

"His sister!" echoed the practitioner, with a look of particular meaning; "if the major has sent for her, she will come."

"Her brother's danger would induce her, one would imagine."

"No doubt, madam," continued the doctor, laconically, bowing low, and giving room to the ladies to pass. The words and the manner were not lost on the younger sister, in whose presence the name of Dunwoodie was never mentioned unheeded.

"Sir," cried Dr. Sitgreaves, on entering the parlor, addressing himself to the only coat of scarlet in the room, "I am advised you are in want of my aid. God send 'tis not Captain Lawton with whom you came in contact, in which case I may be too late."

"There must be some mistake, sir," said Wellmere, haughtily; "it was a surgeon that Major Dunwoodie was to send me, and not an old woman."

"'Tis Dr. Sitgreaves," said Henry Wharton, quickly, though with difficulty suppressing a laugh; "the multitude of his engagements, to-day, has prevented his usual attention to his attire."

"Your pardon, sir," added Wellmere, very ungraciously proceeding to lay aside his coat, and exhibit what he called a wounded arm.

"If, sir," said the surgeon, dryly, "the degrees of Edinburgh — walking your London hospitals — amputating some hundreds of limbs — operating on the human frame in every shape that is warranted by the lights of science, a clear conscience, and the commission of the Continental Congress, can make a surgeon, I am one."

"Your pardon, sir," repeated the colonel, stiffly. "Captain Wharton has accounted for my error."

"For which I thank Captain Wharton," said the surgeon, proceeding coolly to arrange his amputating instruments, with a formality that made the colonel's blood run cold. "Where are you hurt, sir? What! is it then this scratch in your shoulder? In what manner might you have received this wound, sir?"

"From the sword of a rebel dragoon," said the colonel, with emphasis.

"Never. Even the gentle George Singleton would not have breathed on you so harmlessly." He took a piece of sticking-plaster from his pocket, and applied it to the part. "There, sir; that will answer your purpose, and I am certain it is all that is required of me."

"What do you take to be my purpose, then, sir?"

"To report yourself wounded in your dispatches," replied the doctor, with great steadiness; "and you may say that an old woman dressed your hurts — for if one did not, one easily might!"

"Very extraordinary language," muttered the Englishman.

Here Captain Wharton interfered; and, by explaining the mistake of Colonel Wellmere to proceed from his irritated mind and pain of body, he in part succeeded in mollifying the insulted practitioner, who consented to look further into the hurts of the other. They were chiefly bruises from his fall, to which Sitgreaves made some hasty applications, and withdrew.

The horse, having taken their required refreshment, prepared to fall back to their intended position, and it became incumbent on Dunwoodie to arrange the disposal of his prisoners. Sitgreaves he determined to leave in the cot

tage of Mr. Wharton, in attendance on Captain Singleton. Henry came to him with a request that Colonel Wellmere might also be left behind, under his parole, until the troops marched higher into the country. To this the major cheerfully assented; and as all the rest of the prisoners were of the vulgar herd, they were speedily collected, and, under the care of a strong guard, ordered to the interior. The dragoons soon after marched; and the guides, separating in small parties, accompanied by patrols from the horse, spread themselves across the country, in such a manner as to make a chain of sentinels from the waters of the Sound to those of the Hudson.[1]

Dunwoodie had lingered in front of the cottage, after he paid his parting compliments, with an unwillingness to return, that he thought proceeded from his solicitude for his wounded friends. The heart which has not become callous, soon sickens with the glory that has been purchased with a waste of human life. Peyton Dunwoodie, left to himself, and no longer excited by the visions which youthful ardor had kept before him throughout the day, began to feel there were other ties than those which bound the soldier within the rigid rules of honor. He did not waver in his duty, yet he felt how strong was the temptation. His blood had ceased to flow with the impulse created by the battle. The stern expression of his eye gradually gave place to a look of softness; and his reflections on the victory brought with them no satisfaction that compensated for the sacrifices by which it had been purchased. While turning his last lingering gaze on the Locusts, he remembered only that it contained all that he most valued. The friend of his youth was a prisoner, under circumstances that endangered both life and honor. The gentle companion of his toils, who could throw around the rude enjoyments of a soldier the graceful mildness of peace, lay a bleeding victim to his success. The image of the maid who had held, during the day, a disputed sovereignty in his bosom, again rose to his view with a loveliness that banished her rival, glory, from his mind.

[1] The scene of this tale is between these two waters, which are but a few miles from each other.

The last lagging trooper of the corps had already disappeared behind the northern hill, and the major unwillingly turned his horse in the same direction. Frances, impelled by a restless inquietude, now timidly ventured on the piazza of the cottage. The day had been mild and clear, and the sun was shining brightly in a cloudless sky. The tumult, which so lately disturbed the valley, was succeeded by the stillness of death, and the fair scene before her looked as if it had never been marred by the passions of men. One solitary cloud, the collected smoke of the contest, hung over the field ; and this was gradually dispersing, leaving no vestige of the conflict above the peaceful graves of its victims. All the conflicting feelings, all the tumultuous circumstances of the eventful day, appeared like the deceptions of a troubled vision. Frances turned, and caught a glimpse of the retreating figure of him who had been so conspicuous an actor in the scene, and the illusion vanished. She recognized her lover, and, with the truth, came other recollections that drove her to the room, with a heart as sad as that which Dunwoodie himself bore from the valley.

CHAPTER IX.

A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foe appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

LADY OF THE LAKE.

THE party under Captain Lawton had watched the retiring foe to his boats with the most unremitting vigilance, without finding any fit opening for a charge. The experienced successor of Colonel Wellmere knew too well the power of his enemy to leave the uneven surface of the heights, until compelled to descend to the level of the water. Before he attempted this hazardous movement, he threw his men into a compact square, with its outer edges bristling with bayonets. In this position, the impatient trooper well understood that brave men could never be assailed by cavalry with success, and he was reluctantly obliged to hover near them, without seeing any opportunity of stopping their slow but steady march to the beach. A small schooner, which had been their convoy from the city, lay with her guns bearing on the place of embarkation. Against this combination of force and discipline, Lawton had sufficient prudence to see it would be folly to contend, and the English were suffered to embark without molestation. The dragoons lingered on the shore till the last moment, and then they reluctantly commenced their own retreat back to the main body of the corps.

The gathering mists of the evening had begun to darken the valley, as the detachment of Lawton made its reappearance, at its southern extremity. The march of the

troops was slow, and their line extended, for the benefit of ease. In the front rode the captain, side by side with his senior subaltern, apparently engaged in close conference, while the rear was brought up by a young cornet, humming an air, and thinking of the sweets of a straw bed after the fatigues of a hard day's duty.

"Then it struck you too?" said the captain. "The instant I placed my eyes on her, I remembered the face; it is one not easily forgotten. By my faith, Tom, the girl does no discredit to the major's taste."

"She would do honor to the corps," replied the lieutenant, with some warmth; "those blue eyes might easily win a man to gentler employments than this trade of ours. In sober truth, I can easily imagine such a girl might tempt even me to quit the broadsword and saddle, for a darning-needle and pillion."

"Mutiny, sir, mutiny," cried the other, laughing; "what, you, Tom Mason, dare to rival the gay, admired, and withal rich, Major Dunwoodie in his love! You, a lieutenant of cavalry, with but one horse, and he none of the best! whose captain is as tough as a pepperidge log, and has as many lives as a cat!"

"Faith," said the subaltern, smiling in his turn, "the log may yet be split, and Grimalkin lose his lives, if you often charge as madly as you did this morning. What think you of many raps from such a beetle as laid you on your back to-day?"

"Ah! don't mention it, my good Tom; the thought makes my head ache," replied the other, shrugging up his shoulders; "it is what I call forestalling night."

"The night of death?"

"No, sir, the night that follows day. I saw myriads of stars, things which should hide their faces in the presence of the lordly sun. I do think nothing but this thick cap saved me for your comfort a little longer, maugre the cat's lives."

"I have much reason to be obliged to the cap," said Mason, dryly; "that or the skull must have had a reasonable portion of thickness, I admit."

"Come, come, Tom, you are a licensed joker, so I'll not feign anger with you," returned the captain, good-humoredly; "but Singleton's lieutenant, I am fearful, will fare better than yourself for this day's service."

"I believe both of us will be spared the pain of receiving promotion purchased by the death of a comrade and friend," observed Mason kindly; "it was reported that Sitgreaves said he would live."

"From my soul I hope so," exclaimed Lawton: "for a beardless face, that boy carries the stoutest heart I have ever met with. It surprises me, however, that, as we both fell at the same instant, the men behaved so well."

"For the compliment, I might thank you," cried the lieutenant with a laugh; "but modesty forbids; I did my best to stop them, but without success."

"Stop them!" roared the captain; "would you stop men in the middle of a charge?"

"I thought they were going the wrong way," answered the subaltern.

"Ah! our fall drove them to the right about?"

"It was either your fall, or apprehensions of their own; until the major rallied us, we were in admirable disorder."

"Dunwoodie! the major was on the crupper of the Dutchman."

"Ah! but he managed to get off the crupper of the Dutchman. He came in, at half-speed, with the other two troops, and riding between us and the enemy, with that imperative way he has when roused, brought us in line in the twinkling of an eye. Then it was," added the lieutenant, with animation, "that we sent John Bull to the bushes. Oh! it was a sweet charge — heads and tails, until we were upon them."

"The devil! What a sight I missed!"

"You slept through it all."

"Yes," returned the other, with a sigh; "it was all lost to me and poor George Singleton. But, Tom, what will George's sister say to this fair-haired maiden, in yonder white building?"

"Hang herself in her garters," said the subaltern. "I

owe a proper respect to my superiors, but two such angels are more than justly falls to the share of one man, unless he be a Turk or a Hindoo."

"Yes, yes," said the captain, quickly, "the major is ever preaching morality to the youngsters, but he is a sly fellow in the main. Do you observe how fond he is of the cross roads above this valley? Now, if I were to halt the troops twice in the same place, you would all swear there was a petticoat in the wind."

"You are well known to the corps."

"Well, Tom, a slanderous propensity is incurable — but," stretching forward his body in the direction he was gazing, as if to aid him in distinguishing objects through the darkness, "what animal is moving through the field on our right?"

"'Tis a man," said Mason, looking intently at the suspicious object.

"By his hump 'tis a dromedary!" added the captain, eying it keenly. Wheeling his horse suddenly from the highway, he exclaimed, "Harvey Birch! — take him, dead or alive!"

Mason and a few of the leading dragoons only understood the sudden cry, but it was heard throughout the line. A dozen of the men, with the lieutenant at their head, followed the impetuous Lawton, and their speed threatened the pursued with a sudden termination of the race.

Birch prudently kept his position on the rock, where he had been seen by the passing glance of Henry Wharton, until evening had begun to shroud the surrounding objects in darkness. From this height he had seen all the events of the day as they occurred. He had watched, with a beating heart, the departure of the troops under Dunwoodie, and with difficulty had curbed his impatience until the obscurity of night should render his moving free from danger. He had not, however, completed a fourth of his way to his own residence, when his quick ear distinguished the tread of the approaching horse. Trusting to the increasing darkness, he determined to persevere. By crouching and moving quickly along the surface of the ground, he hoped

yet to escape unseen. Captain Lawton was too much engrossed with the foregoing conversation to suffer his eyes to indulge in their usual wandering; and the pedler, perceiving by the voices that the enemy he most feared had passed, yielded to his impatience, and stood erect, in order to make greater progress. The moment his body arose above the shadow of the ground, it was seen, and the chase commenced. For a single instant, Birch was helpless, his blood curdling in his veins at the imminence of the danger, and his legs refusing their natural and necessary office. But it was only for a moment. Casting his pack where he stood, and instinctively tightening the belt he wore, the pedler betook himself to flight. He knew that by bringing himself in a line with his pursuers and the wood, his form would be lost to sight. This he soon effected, and he was straining every nerve to gain the wood itself, when several horsemen rode by him but a short distance on his left, and cut him off from this place of refuge. The pedler threw himself on the ground as they came near him, and was passed unseen. But delay now became too dangerous for him to remain in that position. He accordingly arose, and still keeping in the shadow of the wood, along the skirts of which he heard voices crying to each other to be watchful, he ran with incredible speed in a parallel line, but in an opposite direction, to the march of the dragoons.

The confusion of the chase had been heard by the whole of the men, though none distinctly understood the order of Lawton but those who followed. The remainder were lost in doubt as to the duty that was required of them; and the aforesaid cornet was making eager inquiries of the trooper near him on the subject, when a man, at a short distance in his rear, crossed the road at a single bound. At the same instant, the stentorian voice of Lawton rang through the valley, shouting, —

"Harvey Birch — take him, dead or alive!"

Fifty pistols lighted the scene, and the bullets whistled in every direction round the head of the devoted pedler. A feeling of despair seized his heart, and in the bitterness of that moment he exclaimed, —

"Hunted like a beast of the forest!"

He felt life and its accompaniments to be a burden, and was about to yield himself to his enemies. Nature, however, prevailed. If taken, there was great reason to apprehend that he would not be honored with the forms of a trial, but that most probably the morning sun would witness his ignominious execution; for he had already been condemned to death, and had only escaped that fate by stratagem. These considerations, with the approaching footsteps of his pursuers, roused him to new exertions. He again fled before them. A fragment of a wall, that had withstood the ravages made by war in the adjoining fences of wood, fortunately crossed his path. He hardly had time to throw his exhausted limbs over this barrier, before twenty of his enemies reached its opposite side. Their horses refused to take the leap in the dark, and amid the confusion of the rearing chargers, and the execrations of their riders, Birch was enabled to gain a sight of the base of the hill, on whose summit was a place of perfect security. The heart of the pedler now beat high with hope, when the voice of Captain Lawton again rang in his ears, shouting to his men to make room. The order was obeyed, and the fearless trooper rode at the wall at the top of his horse's speed, plunged the rowels in his charger, and flew over the obstacle in safety. The triumphant hurrahs of the men, and the thundering tread of the horse, too plainly assured the pedler of the emergency of his danger. He was nearly exhausted, and his fate no longer seemed doubtful.

"Stop, or die!" was uttered above his head, and in fearful proximity to his ears.

Harvey stole a glance over his shoulder, and saw, within a bound of him, the man he most dreaded. By the light of the stars he beheld the uplifted arm and the threatening sabre. Fear, exhaustion, and despair, seized his heart, and the intended victim fell at the feet of the dragoon. The horse of Lawton struck the prostrate pedler, and both steed and rider came violently to the earth.

As quick as thought, Birch was on his feet again, with the sword of the discomfited dragoon in his hand. Venge-

ance seems but too natural to human passions. There are few who have not felt the seductive pleasure of making our injuries recoil on their authors; and yet there are some who know how much sweeter it is to return good for evil.

All the wrongs of the pedler shone on his brain with a dazzling brightness. For a moment the demon within him prevailed, and Birch brandished the powerful weapon in the air; in the next, it fell harmless on the reviving but helpless trooper. The pedler vanished up the side of the friendly rock.

"Help Captain Lawton, there!" cried Mason, as he rode up, followed by a dozen of his men; "and some of you dismount with me, and search these rocks; the villain lies here concealed."

"Hold!" roared the discomfited captain, raising himself with difficulty on his feet; "if one of you dismount, he dies. Tom, my good fellow, you will help me to straddle Roanoke again."

The astonished subaltern complied in silence, while the wondering dragoons remained as fixed in their saddles, as if they composed part of the animals they rode.

"You are much hurt, I fear," said Mason, with something of condolence in his manner, as they reëntered the highway, and biting off the end of a cigar for the want of a better quality of tobacco.

"Something so, I do believe," replied the captain, catching his breath, and speaking with difficulty; "I wish our bone-setter was at hand, to examine into the state of my ribs."

"Sitgreaves is left in attendance on Captain Singleton, at the house of Mr. Wharton."

"Then there I halt for the night, Tom. These rude times must abridge ceremony; besides, you may remember the old gentleman professed a kinsman's regard for the corps. I can never think of passing so good a friend without a halt."

"And I will lead the troop to the Four Corners; if we all halt there, we shall breed a famine in the land."

"A condition I never desire to be placed in. The idea of that graceful spinter's cakes is no bad solace for twenty-four hours in the hospital."

"Oh! you won't die if you can think of eating," said Mason, with a laugh.

"I should surely die if I could not," observed the captain, gravely.

"Captain Lawton," said the orderly of his troop, riding to the side of his commanding officer, "we are now passing the house of the pedler spy; is it your pleasure that we burn it?"

"No!" roared the captain, in a voice that startled the disappointed sergeant; "are you an incendiary? would you burn a house in cold blood? let but a spark approach, and the hand that carries it will never light another."

"Zounds!" muttered the sleepy cornet in the rear, as he was nodding on his horse, "there is life in the captain, notwithstanding his tumble."

Lawton and Mason rode on in silence, the latter ruminating on the wonderful change produced in his commander by his fall, when they arrived opposite to the gate before the residence of Mr. Wharton. The troop continued its march; but the captain and his lieutenant dismounted, and, followed by the servant of the former, they proceeded slowly to the door of the cottage.

Colonel Wellmere had already sought a retreat in his own room; Mr. Wharton and his son were closeted by themselves; and the ladies were administering the refreshments of the tea-table to the surgeon of the dragoons, who had seen one of his patients in his bed, and the other happily enjoying the comforts of a sweet sleep. A few natural inquiries from Miss Peyton had opened the soul of the doctor, who knew every individual of her extensive family connection in Virginia, and who even thought it possible that he had seen the lady herself. The amiable spinster smiled as she felt it to be improbable that she should ever have met her new acquaintance before, and not remember his singularities. It however greatly relieved the embarrassment of their situation, and something like a discourse was maintained between them; the nieces were only listeners, nor could the aunt be said to be much more.

"As I was observing, Miss Peyton, it was merely the

noxious vapors of the low lands that rendered the plantation of your brother an unfit residence for man; but quadrupeds were"—

"Bless me, what's that?" said Miss Peyton, turning pale at the report of the pistols fired at Birch.

"It sounds prodigiously like the concussion on the atmosphere made by the explosion of fire-arms," said the surgeon, sipping his tea with great indifference. "I should imagine it to be the troop of Captain Lawton returning, did I not know the captain never uses the pistol, and that he dreadfully abuses the sabre."

"Merciful providence!" exclaimed the agitated maiden, "he would not injure one with it, certainly."

"Injure!" repeated the other quickly: "it is certain death, madam; the most random blows imaginable; all that I can say to him will have no effect."

"But Captain Lawton is the officer we saw this morning, and is surely your friend," said Frances, hastily, observing her aunt to be seriously alarmed.

"I find no fault with his want of friendship; the man is well enough if he would learn to cut scientifically. All trades, madam, ought to be allowed to live; but what is to become of a surgeon, if his patients are dead before he sees them!"

The doctor continued haranguing on the probability and improbability of its being the returning troop, until a loud knock at the door gave new alarm to the ladies. Instinctively laying his hand on a small saw, that had been his companion for the whole day, in the vain expectation of an amputation, the surgeon, coolly assuring the ladies that he would stand between them and danger, proceeded in person to answer the summons.

"Captain Lawton!" exclaimed the surgeon, as he beheld the trooper leaning on the arm of his subaltern, and with difficulty crossing the threshold.

"Ah! my dear bone-setter, is it you? You are here very fortunately to inspect my carcass; but do lay aside that rascally saw!"

A few words from Mason explained the nature and man

ner of his captain's hurts, and Miss Peyton cheerfully accorded the required accommodations. While the room intended for the trooper was getting ready, and the doctor was giving certain portentous orders, the captain was invited to rest himself in the parlor. On the table was a dish of more substantial food than ordinarily adorned the afternoon's repast, and it soon caught the attention of the dragoons. Miss Peyton, recollecting that they had probably made their only meal that day at her own table, kindly invited them to close it with another. The offer required no pressing, and in a few minutes the two were comfortably seated, and engaged in an employment that was only interrupted by an occasional wry face from the captain, who moved his body in evident pain. These interruptions, however, interfered but little with the principal business in hand; and the captain had got happily through with this important duty, before the surgeon returned to announce all things ready for his accommodation, in the room above stairs.

"Eating!" cried the astonished physician; "Captain Lawton, do you wish to die?"

"I have no particular ambition that way," said the trooper, rising, and bowing good night to the ladies; "and, therefore, have been providing the materials necessary to preserve life."

The surgeon muttered his dissatisfaction, while he followed Mason and the captain from the apartment.

Every house in America had, at that day, what was emphatically called its best room, and this had been allotted, by the unseen influence of Sarah, to Colonel Wellmere. The down counterpane, which a clear frosty night would render extremely grateful over bruised limbs, decked the English officer's bed. A massive silver tankard, richly embossed with the Wharton arms, held the beverage he was to drink during the night; while beautiful vessels of china performed the same office for the two American captains. Sarah was certainly unconscious of the silent preference she had been giving to the English officer; and it is equally certain, that but for his hurts, bed, tankard, and everything but the beverage, would have been matters of indifference

to Captain Lawton, half of whose nights were spent in his clothes, and not a few of them in the saddle. After taking possession, however, of a small but very comfortable room, Doctor Sitgreaves proceeded to inquire into the state of his injuries. He had begun to pass his hand over the body of his patient, when the latter cried impatiently, —

"Sitgreaves, do me the favor to lay that rascally saw aside, or I shall have recourse to my sabre in self-defense; the sight of it makes my blood cold."

"Captain Lawton, for a man who has so often exposed life and limb, you are unaccountably afraid of a very useful instrument."

"Heaven keep me from its use," said the trooper, with a shrug.

"You would not despise the lights of science, nor refuse surgical aid, because this saw might be necessary?"

"I would."

"You would!"

"Yes; you shall never joint me like a quarter of beef, while I have life to defend myself," cried the resolute dragoon. "But I grow sleepy; are any of my ribs broken?"

"No."

"Any of my bones?"

"No."

"Tom, I'll thank you for that pitcher." As he ended his draught, he very deliberately turned his back on his companions, and good-naturedly cried, "Good night, Mason; good night, Galen."

Captain Lawton entertained a profound respect for the surgical abilities of his comrade, but he was very skeptical on the subject of administering internally for the ailings of the human frame. With a full stomach, a stout heart, and a clear conscience, he often maintained that a man might bid defiance to the world and its vicissitudes. Nature provided him with the second, and, to say the truth, he strove manfully himself to keep up the other two requisites in his creed. It was a favorite maxim with him, that the last thing death assailed was the eyes, and next to the last, the jaws. This he interpreted to be a clear expression of the

intention of nature, that every man might regulate, by his own volition, whatever was to be admitted into the sanctuary of his mouth; consequently, if the guest proved unpalatable, he had no one to blame but himself. The surgeon, who was well acquainted with these views of his patient, beheld him, as he cavalierly turned his back on Mason and himself, with a commiserating contempt, replaced in their leathern repository the phials he had exhibited, with a species of care that was allied to veneration, gave the saw, as he concluded, a whirl of triumph, and departed, without condescending to notice the compliment of the trooper. Mason, finding, by the breathing of the captain, that his own good night would be unheard, hastened to pay his respects to the ladies — after which he mounted, and followed the troop at the top of his horse's speed.

CHAPTER X.

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires,
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

GRAY.

THE possessions of Mr. Wharton extended to some distance on each side of the house in which he dwelt, and most of his land was unoccupied. A few scattered dwellings were to be seen in different parts of his domains, but they were fast falling to decay, and were untenanted. The proximity of the country to the contending armies had nearly banished the pursuits of agriculture from the land. It was useless for the husbandman to devote his time, and the labor of his hands, to obtain overflowing garners, that the first foraging party would empty. None tilled the earth with any other view than to provide the scanty means of subsistence, except those who were placed so near to one of the adverse parties as to be safe from the inroads of the light troops of the other. To these the war offered a golden harvest, more especially to such as enjoyed the benefits of an access to the royal army. Mr. Wharton did not require the use of his lands for the purposes of subsistence; and he willingly adopted the guarded practice of the day, limiting his attention to such articles as were soon to be consumed within his own walls, or could be easily secreted from the prying eyes of the foragers. In consequence, the ground on which the action was fought had not a single inhabited building, besides the one belonging to the father of Harvey Birch. This house stood between the place where the cavalry had met, and that where the charge had been made on the party of Wellmere.

To Katy Haynes it had been a day fruitful of incidents

The prudent housekeeper had kept her political feelings in a state of rigid neutrality; her own friends had espoused the cause of the country, but the maiden herself never lost sight of that important moment, when, like females of more illustrious hopes, she might be required to sacrifice her love of country on the altar of domestic harmony. And yet, notwithstanding all her sagacity, there were moments when the good woman had grievous doubts into which scale she ought to throw the weight of her eloquence, in order to be certain of supporting the cause favored by the pedler. There was so much that was equivocal in his movements and manner, that often, when, in the privacy of their household, she was about to offer a philippic on Washington and his followers, discretion sealed her mouth, and distrust beset her mind. In short, the whole conduct of the mysterious being she studied was of a character to distract the opinions of one who took a more enlarged view of men and life than came within the competency of his housekeeper.

The battle of the Plains had taught the cautious Washington the advantages his enemy possessed in organization, arms, and discipline. There were difficulties to be mastered by his own vigilance and care. Drawing off his troops to the heights, in the northern part of the county, he had bidden defiance to the attacks of the royal army, and Sir William Howe fell back to the enjoyment of his barren conquest — a deserted city. Never afterwards did the opposing armies make the trial of strength within the limits of West-Chester; yet hardly a day passed, that the partisans did not make their inroads; or a sun rise, that the inhabitants were spared the relation of excesses which the preceding darkness had served to conceal. Most of the movements of the pedler were made at the hours which others allotted to repose. The evening sun would frequently leave him at one extremity of the county, and the morning find him at the other. His pack was his never-failing companion; and there were those who closely studied him, in his moments of traffic, and thought his only purpose was the accumulation of gold. He would be often

seen near the Highlands, with a body bending under its load; and again near the Harlaem River, travelling with lighter steps, with his face towards the setting sun. But these glances at him were uncertain and fleeting. The intermediate time no eye could penetrate. For months he disappeared, and no traces of his course were ever known.

Strong parties held the heights of Harlaem, and the northern end of Manhattan Island was bristling with the bayonets of the English sentinels, yet the pedler glided among them unnoticed and uninjured. His approaches to the American lines were also frequent; but generally so conducted as to baffle pursuit. Many a sentinel, placed in the gorges of the mountains, spoke of a strange figure that had been seen gliding by them in the mists of the evening These stories reached the ears of the officers, and, as we have related, in two instances the trader had fallen into the hands of the Americans. The first time he had escaped from Lawton, shortly after his arrest; but the second he was condemned to die. On the morning of his intended execution, the cage was opened, but the bird had flown. This extraordinary escape had been made from the custody of a favorite officer of Washington, and sentinels who had been thought worthy to guard the person of the commander-in-chief. Bribery and treason could not be imputed to men so well esteemed, and the opinion gained ground among the common soldiery, that the pedler had dealings with the dark one. Katy, however, always repelled this opinion with indignation; for within the recesses of her own bosom, the housekeeper, in ruminating on the events, concluded that the evil spirit did not pay in gold. Nor, continued the wary spinster in her cogitations, does Washington; paper and promises were all that the leader of the American troops could dispense to his servants. After the alliance with France, when silver became more abundant in the country, although the scrutinizing eyes of Katy never let any opportunity of examining into the deer-skin purse pass unimproved, she was never able to detect the image of Louis intruding into the presence of the well-known countenance of George III. In short, the secret

hoard of Harvey su ciently showed in its contents that all its contributions had been received from the British.

The house of Birch had been watched at different times by the Americans, with a view to his arrest, but never with success; the reputed spy possessing a secret means of intelligence, that invariably defeated their schemes. Once, when a strong body of the continental army held the Four Corners for a whole summer, orders had been received from Washington himself, never to leave the door of Harvey Birch unwatched. The command was rigidly obeyed, and during this long period the pedler was unseen; the detachment was withdrawn, and the following night Birch reentered his dwelling. The father of Harvey had been greatly molested, in consequence of the suspicious character of the son. But, notwithstanding the most minute scrutiny into the conduct of the old man, no fact could be substantiated against him to his injury, and his property was too small to keep alive the zeal of patriots by profession. Its confiscation and purchase would not have rewarded their trouble. Age and sorrow were now about to spare him further molestation, for the lamp of life had been drained of its oil. The recent separation of the father and son had been painful, but they had submitted in obedience to what both thought a duty. The old man had kept his dying situation a secret from the neighborhood, in the hope that he might still have the company of his child in his last moments. The confusion of the day, and his increasing dread that Harvey might be too late, helped to hasten the event he would fain arrest for a little while. As night set in, his illness increased to such a degree, that the dismayed housekeeper sent a truant boy, who had shut up himself with them during the combat, to the Locusts, in quest of a companion to cheer her solitude. Cæsar, alone, could be spared, and, loaded with eatables and cordials by the kind-hearted Miss Peyton, the black had been dispatched on his duty. The dying man was past the use of medicines, and his chief anxiety seemed to centre in a meeting with his child.

The noise of the chase had been heard by the group in

the house, but its cause was not understood; and as both the black and Katy were apprised of the detachment of American horse being below them, they supposed it to proceed from the return of that party. They heard the dragoons, as they moved slowly by the building; but in compliance with the prudent injunction of the black, the housekeeper forbore to indulge her curiosity. The old man had closed his eyes, and his attendants believed him to be asleep. The house contained two large rooms, and as many small ones. One of the former served for kitchen and sitting-room; in the other lay the father of Birch; of the latter, one was the sanctuary of the vestal, and the other contained the stock of provisions. A huge chimney of stone rose in the centre, serving, of itself, for a partition between the larger rooms; and fire-places of corresponding dimensions were in each apartment. A bright flame was burning in that of the common room, and within the very jambs of its monstrous jaws sat Cæsar and Katy, at the time of which we write. The African was impressing his caution on the housekeeper, and commenting on the general danger of indulging an idle curiosity.

"Best nebber tempt a Satan," said Cæsar, rolling up his eyes till the whites glistened by the glare of the fire; "I berry like heself to lose an ear for carrying a little bit of a letter; dere much mischief come of curiosity. If dere had nebber been a man curious to see Africa, dere would be no color people out of deir own country; but I wish Harvey get back."

"It is very disregardful in him to be away at such a time," said Katy, imposingly. "Suppose now his father wanted to make his last will in the testament, who is there to do so solemn and awful an act for him? Harvey is a very wasteful and a very disregardful man!"

"Perhap he make him afore?"

"It would not be a wonderment if he had," returned the housekeeper; "he is whole days looking into the Bible."

"Then he read a berry good book," said the black solemnly, "Miss Fanny read in him to Dinah now and den."

"You are right, Cæsar. The Bible is the best of

books, and one that reads it as often as Harvey's father should have the best of reasons for so doing. This is no more than common-sense."

She rose from her seat, and stealing softly to a chest of drawers in the room of the sick man, she took from it a large Bible, heavily bound, and secured with strong clasps of brass, with which she returned to the negro. The volume was eagerly opened, and they proceeded instantly to examine its pages. Katy was far from an expert scholar, and to Cæsar the characters were absolutely strangers. For some time the housekeeper was occupied in finding out the word Matthew, in which she had no sooner succeeded than she pointed out the word, with great complacency, to the attentive Cæsar.

"Berry well, now look him t'rough," said the black, peeping over the housekeeper's shoulder, as he held a long, lank candle of yellow tallow, in such a manner as to throw its feeble light on the volume.

"Yes, but I must begin with the very beginning of the book," replied the other, turning the leaves carefully back, until, moving two at once, she lighted upon a page covered with writing. "Here," said the housekeeper, shaking with the eagerness of expectation, "here are the very words themselves; now I would give the world itself to know whom he has left the big silver shoe-buckles to."

"Read 'em," said Cæsar, laconically.

"And the black walnut drawers; for Harvey could never want furniture of that quality, as long as he is a bachelor!"

"Why he no want 'em as well as he fader?"

"And the six silver table-spoons; Harvey always uses the iron!"

"P'r'ap he say, widout so much talk," returned the sententious black, pointing one of his crooked and dingy fingers at the open volume.

Thus repeatedly advised, and impelled by her own curiosity, Katy began to read. Anxious to come to the part which most interested herself, she dipped at once into the centre of the subject.

"Chester Birch, born September 1st, 1755," — read the spinster, with a deliberation that did no great honor to her scholarship.

"Well, what he gib him?"

"Abigail Birch, born July 12th, 1757," — continued the housekeeper, in the same tone.

"I t'ink he ought to gib her 'e spoon."

"June 1st, 1760. On this awful day, the judgment of an offended God lighted on my house:" a heavy groan from the adjoining room made the spinster instinctively close the volume, and Cæsar, for a moment, shook with fear. Neither possessed sufficient resolution to go and examine the condition of the sufferer, but his heavy breathing continued as usual. Katy dared not, however, re-open the Bible, and carefully securing its clasps, it was laid on the table in silence. Cæsar took his chair again, and after looking timidly round the room, remarked, —

"I t'ought he time war' come!"

"No," said Katy, solemnly, "he will live till the tide is out, or the first cock crows in the morning."

"Poor man!" continued the black, nestling still farther into the chimney-corner, "I hope he lay quiet after he die."

"'Twould be no astonishment to me if he didn't; for they say an unquiet life makes an uneasy grave."

"Johnny Birch a berry good man in he way. All mankind can't be a minister; for if he do, who would be a congregation?"

"Ah! Cæsar, he is good only who does good — can you tell me why honestly gotten gold should be hidden in the bowels of the earth!"

"Grach! — I t'ink it must be to keep t'e Skinner from findin' him; if he know where he be, why don't he dig him up?"

"There may be reasons not comprehensible to you," said Katy, moving her chair so that her clothes covered the charmed stone, underneath which lay the secret treasures of the pedler, unable to refrain speaking of that which she would have been very unwilling to reveal; "but a rough outside often holds a smooth inside." Cæsar stared around

the building, unable to fathom the hidden meaning of his companion, when his roving eyes suddenly became fixed, and his teeth chattered with affright. The change in the countenance of the black was instantly perceived by Katy, and turning her face, she saw the pedler himself, standing within the door of the room.

"Is he alive?" asked Birch, tremulously, and seemingly afraid to receive the answer.

"Surely," said Katy, rising hastily, and officiously offering her chair; "he must live till day, or till the tide is down."

Disregarding all but the fact that his father still lived, the pedler stole gently into the room of his dying parent. The tie which bound the father and son was of no ordinary kind. In the wide world they were all to each other. Had Katy but read a few lines farther in the record, she would have seen the sad tale of their misfortunes. At one blow competence and kindred had been swept from them, and from that day to the present hour, persecution and distress had followed their wandering steps. Approaching the bedside, Harvey leaned his body forward, and, in a voice nearly choked by his feelings, he whispered near the ear of the sick, —

"Father, do you know me?"

The parent slowly opened his eyes, and a smile of satisfaction passed over his pallid features, leaving behind it the impression of death, more awful by the contrast. The pedler gave a restorative he had brought with him to the parched lips of the sick man, and for a few minutes new vigor seemed imparted to his frame. He spoke, but slowly, and with difficulty. Curiosity kept Katy silent; awe had the same effect on Cæsar; and Harvey seemed hardly to breathe, as he listened to the language of the departing spirit.

"My son," said the father in a hollow voice, "God is as merciful as He is just; if I threw the cup of salvation from my lips when a youth, He graciously offers it to me in mine age. He has chastised to purify, and I go to join the spirits of our lost family. In a little while, my child, you

will be alone. I know you too well not to foresee you will be a pilgrim through life. The bruised reed may endure, but it will never rise. You have that within you, Harvey, that will guide you aright; persevere, as you have begun, for the duties of life are never to be neglected — and" — a noise in the adjoining room interrupted the dying man, and the impatient pedler hastened to learn the cause, followed by Katy and the black. The first glance of his eye on the figure in the doorway told the trader but too well his errand, and the fate that probably awaited himself. The intruder was a man still young in years, but his lineaments bespoke a mind long agitated by evil passions. His dress was of the meanest materials, and so ragged and unseemly, as to give him the appearance of studied poverty. His hair was prematurely whitened, and his sunken, lowering eye avoided the bold, forward look of innocence. There was a restlessness in his movements, and an agitation in his manner, that proceeded from the workings of the foul spirit within him, and which was not less offensive to others than distressing to himself. This man was a well-known leader of one of those gangs of marauders who infested the county with a semblance of patriotism, and who were guilty of every grade of offense, from simple theft up to murder. Behind him stood several other figures clad in a similar manner, but whose countenances expressed nothing more than the indifference of brutal insensibility. They were all well armed with muskets and bayonets, and provided with the usual implements of foot-soldiers. Harvey knew resistance to be vain, and quietly submitted to their directions. In the twinkling of an eye both he and Cæsar were stripped of their decent garments, and made to exchange clothes with two of the filthiest of the band. They were then placed in separate corners of the room, and, under the muzzles of the muskets, required faithfully to answer such interrogatories as were put to them.

"Where is your pack?" was the first question to the pedler.

"Hear me," said Birch, trembling with agitation; "in the next room is my father, now in the agonies of death; let

me go to him, receive his blessing, and close his eyes, and you shall have all — aye, all."

"Answer me as I put the questions, or this musket shall send you to keep the old driveler company: where is your pack?"

"I will tell you nothing, unless you let me go to my father," said the pedler, resolutely.

His persecutor raised his arm with a malicious sneer, and was about to execute his threat, when one of his companions checked him.

"What would you do?" he said, "you surely forget the reward. Tell us where are your goods, and you shall go to your father."

Birch complied instantly, and a man was dispatched in quest of the booty; he soon returned, throwing the bundle on the floor, swearing it was as light as feathers.

"Aye," cried the leader, "there must be gold somewhere for what it did contain. Give us your gold, Mr. Birch; we know you have it; you will not take continental, not you."

"You break your faith," said Harvey.

"Give us your gold," exclaimed the other, furiously, pricking the pedler with his bayonet until the blood followed his pushes in streams. At this instant a slight movement was heard in the adjoining room, and Harvey cried imploringly, —

"Let me — let me go to my father, and you shall have all."

"I swear you shall go then," said the Skinner.

"Here, take the trash," cried Birch, as he threw aside the purse, which he had contrived to conceal, notwithstanding the change in his garments.

The robber raised it from the floor with a hellish laugh.

"Aye, but it shall be to your father in heaven."

"Monster! have you no feeling, no faith, no honesty?"

"To hear him, one would think there was not a rope around his neck already," said the other, laughing. "There is no necessity for your being uneasy, Mr. Birch; if the old man gets a few hours the start of you in the journey, you will be sure to follow him before noon to-morrow."

This unfeeling communication had no effect on the pedler, who listened with gasping breath to every sound from the room of his parent, until he heard his own name spoken in the hollow, sepulchral tones of death. Birch could endure no more, but shrieking out, —

"Father! hush — father! I come — I come!" he darted by his keeper, and was the next moment pinned to the wall by the bayonet of another of the band. Fortunately, his quick motion had caused him to escape a thrust aimed at his life, and it was by his clothes only that he was confined.

"No, Mr. Birch," said the Skinner, "we know you too well for a slippery rascal, to trust you out of sight — your gold, your gold!"

"You have it," said the pedler, writhing with agony.

"Aye, we have the purse, but you have more purses. King George is a prompt paymaster, and you have done him many a piece of good service. Where is your hoard? without it you will never see your father."

"Remove the stone underneath the woman," cried the pedler, eagerly — "remove the stone."

"He raves! he raves!" said Katy, instinctively moving her position to a different stone from the one on which she had been standing. In a moment it was torn from its bed, and nothing but earth was seen beneath.

"He raves! you have driven him from his right mind," continued the trembling spinster: "would any man in his senses keep gold under a hearth?"

"Peace, babbling fool!" cried Harvey. "Lift the corner stone, and you will find that which will make you rich, and me a beggar."

"And then you will be despisable," said the housekeeper, bitterly. "A pedler without goods and without money is sure to be despisable."

"There will be enough left to pay for his halter," cried the Skinner, who was not slow to follow the instructions of Harvey, soon lighting upon a store of English guineas. The money was quickly transferred to a bag, notwithstanding the declarations of the spinster, that her dues were unsatisfied, and that, of right, ten of the guineas were her property

Delighted with a prize that greatly exceeded their expectations, the band prepared to depart, intending to take the pedler with them, in order to give him up to the American troops above, and to claim the reward offered for his apprehension. Everything was ready, and they were about to lift Birch in their arms, for he resolutely refused to move an inch, when a form appeared in their midst, which appalled the stoutest heart among them. The father had arisen from his bed, and he tottered forth at the cries of his son. Around his body was thrown the sheet of the bed, and his fixed eye and haggard face gave him the appearance of a being from another world. Even Katy and Cæsar thought it was the spirit of the elder Birch, and they fled the house, followed by the alarmed Skinners in a body.

The excitement, which had given the sick man strength, soon vanished, and the pedler, lifting him in his arms, reconveyed him to his bed. The reaction of the system which followed hastened to close the scene.

The glazed eye of the father was fixed upon the son; his lips moved, but his voice was unheard. Harvey bent down, and, with the parting breath of his parent, received his dying benediction. A life of privation, and of wrongs, embittered most of the future hours of the pedler. But under no sufferings, in no misfortunes, the subject of poverty and obloquy, the remembrance of that blessing never left him; it constantly gleamed over the images of the past, shedding a holy radiance around his saddest hours of despondency; it cheered the prospect of the future with the prayers of a pious spirit; and it brought the sweet assurance of having faithfully and truly discharged the sacred offices of filial love.

The retreat of Cæsar and the spinster had been too precipitate to admit of much calculation; yet they themselves instinctively separated from the Skinners. After fleeing a short distance they paused, and the maiden commenced in a solemn voice, —

"Oh! Cæsar, was it not dreadful to walk before he had been laid in his grave! It must have been the money that

disturbed him; they say Captain Kidd walks near the spot where he buried gold in the old war."

"I neber t'ink Johnny Birch hab such a big eye!" said the African, his teeth yet chattering with the fright.

"I'm sure 'twould be a botherment to a living soul to lose so much money. Harvey will be nothing but an utterly despisable, poverty-stricken wretch. I wonder who he thinks would even be his housekeeper!"

"Maybe a spooke take away Harvey, too," observed Cæsar, moving still nearer to the side of the maiden. But a new idea had seized the imagination of the spinster. She thought it not improbable that the prize had been forsaken in the confusion of the retreat; and after deliberating and reasoning for some time with Cæsar, they determined to venture back, and ascertain this important fact, and, if possible, learn what had been the fate of the pedler. Much time was spent in cautiously approaching the dreaded spot; and as the spinster had sagaciously placed herself in the line of the retreat of the Skinners, every stone was examined in the progress in search of the abandoned gold. But although the suddenness of the alarm and the cry of Cæsar had impelled the freebooters to so hasty a retreat, they grasped the hoard with a hold that death itself would not have loosened. Perceiving everything to be quiet within, Katy at length mustered resolution to enter the dwelling, where she found the pedler, with a heavy heart, performing the last sad offices for the dead. A few words sufficed to explain to Katy the nature of her mistake; but Cæsar continued to his dying day to astonish the sable inmates of the kitchen with learned dissertations on spookes, and to relate how direful was the appearance of that of Johnny Birch.

The danger compelled the pedler to abridge even the short period that American custom leaves the deceased with us; and, aided by the black and Katy, his painful task was soon ended. Cæsar volunteered to walk a couple of miles with orders to a carpenter; and, the body being habited in its ordinary attire, was left, with a sheet thrown decently over it, to await the return of the messenger.

The Skinners had fled precipitately to the wood, which

was but a short distance from the house of Birch, and once safely sheltered within its shades, they halted, and mustered their panic-stricken forces.

"What in the name of fury seized your coward hearts?" cried their dissatisfied leader, drawing his breath heavily.

"The same question might be asked yourself," returned one of the band, sullenly.

"From your fright, I thought a party of De Lancey's men were upon us. Oh! you are brave gentlemen at a race!"

"We follow our captain."

"Then follow me back, and let us secure the scoundrel, and receive the reward."

"Yes; and by the time we reach the house, that black rascal will have the mad Virginian upon us; by my soul, I would rather meet fifty Cow-Boys than that single man."

"Fool!" cried the enraged leader, "don't you know Dunwoodie's horse are at the Corners, full two miles from here?"

"I care not where the dragoons are, but I will swear that I saw Captain Lawton enter the house of old Wharton, while I lay watching an opportunity of getting the British colonel's horse from the stable."

"And if he should come, won't a bullet silence a dragoon from the south as well as from old England?"

"Aye, but I don't choose a hornet's nest about my ears; rase the skin of one of that corps, and you will never see another peaceable night's foraging again."

"Well," muttered the leader, as they retired deeper into the wood, "this sottish pedler will stay to see the old devil buried; and though we cannot touch him at the funeral (for that would raise every old woman and priest in America against us), he'll wait to look after the movables, and to-morrow night shall wind up his concerns."

With this threat they withdrew to one of their usual places of resort, until darkness should again give them an opportunity of marauding on the community without danger of detection.

CHAPTER XI.

O wo ! O woful, woful, woful day !
Most lamentable day : most woful day,
That ever, ever, I did yet behold !
O day ! O day ! O day ! O hateful day !
Never was seen so black a day as this :
O woful day ! O woful day !

SHAKESPEARE.

THE family at the Locusts had slept, or watched, through all the disturbances at the cottage of Birch, in perfect ignorance of their occurrence. The attacks of the Skinners were always made with so much privacy as to exclude the sufferers, not only from succor, but frequently, through a dread of future depredations, from the commiseration of their neighbors also. Additional duties had drawn the ladies from their pillows at an hour somewhat earlier than usual; and Captain Lawton, notwithstanding the sufferings of his body, had risen in compliance with a rule from which he never departed, of sleeping but six hours at a time. This was one of the few points, in which the care of the human frame was involved, on which the trooper and the surgeon of horse were ever known to agree. The doctor had watched, during the night, by the side of the bed of Captain Singleton, without once closing his eyes. Occasionally he would pay a visit to the wounded Englishman, who, being more hurt in the spirit than in the flesh, tolerated the interruptions with a very ill grace ; and once, for an instant, he ventured to steal softly to the bed of his obstinate comrade, and was near succeeding in obtaining a touch of his pulse, when a terrible oath, sworn by the trooper in a dream, startled the prudent surgeon, and warned him of a trite saying in the corps, " that Captain Lawton always slept with one eye open." This group had assembled in one of the parlors as

the sun made its appearance over the eastern hill, dispersing the columns of fog which had enveloped the low land.

Miss Peyton was looking from a window in the direction of the tenement of the pedler, and was expressing a kind anxiety after the welfare of the sick man, when the person of Katy suddenly emerged from the dense covering of an earthly cloud, whose mists were scattering before the cheering rays of the sun, and was seen making hasty steps towards the Locusts. There was that in the air of the housekeeper which bespoke distress of an unusual nature, and the kind-hearted mistress of the Locusts opened the door of the room, with the benevolent intention of soothing a grief that seemed so overwhelming. A nearer view of the disturbed features of the visitor confirmed Miss Peyton in her belief; and, with the shock that gentle feelings ever experience at a sudden and endless separation from even the meanest of their associates, she said hastily, —

"Katy, is he gone?"

"No, ma'am," replied the disturbed damsel, with great bitterness, "he is not yet gone, but he may go as soon as he pleases now, for the worst is done. I do verily believe, Miss Peyton, they haven't so much as left him money enough to buy him another suit of clothes to cover his nakedness, and those he has on are none of the best, I can tell you."

"How!" exclaimed the other, astonished, "could any one have the heart to plunder a man in such distress?"

"Hearts!" repeated Katy, catching her breath; "men like them have no bowels at all. Plunder and distress, indeed! Why, ma'am, there were in the iron pot, in plain sight, fifty-four guineas of gold, besides what lay underneath, which I couldn't count without handling; and I didn't like to touch it, for they say that another's gold is apt to stick — so, judging from that in sight, there wasn't less than two hundred guineas, besides what might have been in the deer-skin purse. But Harvey is little better now than a beggar; and a beggar, Miss Jeanette, is the most awfully despisable of all earthly creatures."

"Poverty is to be pitied, and not despised," said the lady,

still unable to comprehend the extent of the misfortune that had befallen her neighbor during the night. "But how is the old man? and does this loss affect him much?"

The countenance of Katy changed, from the natural expression of concern, to the set form of melancholy, as she answered, —

"He is happily removed from the cares of the world; the chinking of the money made him get out of his bed, and the poor soul found the shock too great for him. He died about two hours and ten minutes before the cock crowed, as near as we can say;" she was interrupted by the physician, who, approaching, inquired, with much interest, the nature of the disorder. Glancing her eye over the figure of this new acquaintance, Katy, instinctively adjusting her dress, replied, —

"'Twas the troubles of the times, and the loss of property, that brought him down; he wasted from day to day, and all my care and anxiety were lost; for now Harvey is no better than a beggar, and who is there to pay me for what I have done?"

"God will reward you for all the good you have done," said Miss Peyton, mildly.

"Yes," interrupted the spinster hastily, and with an air of reverence that was instantly succeeded by an expression that denoted more of worldly care; "but then I have left my wages for three years past in the hands of Harvey, and how am I to get them? My brothers told me, again and again, to ask for my money; but I always thought accounts between relations were easily settled."

"Were you related, then, to Birch?" asked Miss Peyton, observing her to pause.

"Why," returned the housekeeper, hesitating a little, "I thought we were as good as so. I wonder if I have no claim on the house and garden; though they say, now it is Harvey's, it will surely be confisticated;" turning to Lawton, who had been sitting in one posture, with his piercing eyes lowering at her through his thick brows, in silence, "perhaps this gentleman knows — he seems to take an interest in my story."

"Madam," said the trooper, bowing very low, "both you and the tale are extremely interesting" — Katy smiled involuntarily — "but my humble knowledge is limited to the setting of a squadron in the field, and using it when there. I beg leave to refer you to Dr. Archibald Sitgreaves, a gentleman of universal attainments and unbounded philanthropy; the very milk of human sympathies, and a mortal foe to all indiscriminate cutting."

The surgeon drew up, and employed himself in whistling a low air, as he looked over some phials on a table; but the housekeeper, turning to him with an inclination of the head, continued, —

"I suppose, sir, a woman has no dower in her husband's property, unless they be actually married?"

It was a maxim with Dr. Sitgreaves, that no species of knowledge was to be despised; and, consequently, he was an empiric in everything but his profession. At first, indignation at the irony of his comrade kept him silent; but, suddenly changing his purpose, he answered the applicant with a good-natured smile, —

"I judge not. If death has anticipated your nuptials, I am fearful you have no remedy against his stern decrees."

To Katy this sounded well, although she understood nothing of its meaning, but "death" and "nuptials." To this part of his speech, then, she directed her reply.

"I did think he only waited the death of the old gentleman before he married," said the housekeeper, looking on the carpet; "but now he is nothing more than despisable, or, what's the same thing, a pedler without house, pack, or money. It might be hard for a man to get a wife at all in such a predicary — don't you think it would, Miss Peyton?"

"I seldom trouble myself with such things," said the lady gravely.

During this dialogue Captain Lawton had been studying the countenance and manner of the housekeeper, with a most ludicrous gravity; and, fearful the conversation would cease, he inquired, with an appearance of great interest, —

"You think it was age and debility that removed the old gentleman at last?"

"And the troublesome times. Trouble is a heavy pull-down to a sick-bed; but I suppose his time had come, and when that happens, it matters but little what doctor's stuff we take."

"Let me set you right in that particular," interrupted the surgeon; "we must all die, it is true, but it is permitted us to use the lights of science, in arresting dangers as they occur, until" —

"We can die *secundum artem*," cried the trooper.

To this observation the physician did not deign to reply; but, deeming it necessary to his professional dignity that the conversation should continue, he added, —

"Perhaps, in this instance, judicious treatment might have prolonged the life of the patient. Who administered to the case?"

"No one yet," said the housekeeper, with quickness; "I expect he has made his last will in the testament."

The surgeon disregarded the smile of the ladies, and pursued his inquiries.

"It is doubtless wise to be prepared for death. But under whose care was the sick man during his indisposition?"

"Under mine," answered Katy, with an air of a little importance; "and care thrown away I may well call it; for Harvey is quite too despisable to be any sort of compensation at present."

The mutual ignorance of each other's meaning made very little interruption to the dialogue, for both took a good deal for granted, and Sitgreaves pursued the subject.

"And how did you treat him?"

"Kindly, you may be certain," said Katy, rather tartly.

"The doctor means medically, madam," observed Captain Lawton, with a face that would have honored the funeral of the deceased.

"I doctored him mostly with yarbs," said the housekeeper, smiling, as if conscious of error.

"With simples," returned the surgeon; "they are safer

in the hands of the unlettered than more powerful remedies: but why had you no regular attendant?"

"I'm sure Harvey has suffered enough already from having so much concerns with the rig'lars," replied the housekeeper; "he has lost his all, and made himself a vagabond through the land; and I have reason to rue the day I ever crossed the threshold of his house."

"Dr. Sitgreaves does not mean a rig'lar soldier, but a regular physician, madam," said the trooper.

"Oh!" cried the maiden, again correcting herself, "for the best of all reasons; there was none to be had, so I took care of him myself. If there had been a doctor at hand, I am sure we would gladly have had him; for my part, I am clear for doctoring, though Harvey says I am killing myself with medicines; but I am sure it will make but little difference to him, whether I live or die."

"Therein you show your sense," said the surgeon, approaching the spinster, who sat holding the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet to the genial heat of a fine fire, making the most of comfort amid all her troubles; "you appear to be a sensible, discreet woman, and some who have had opportunities of acquiring more correct views might envy you your respect for knowledge and the lights of science."

Although the housekeeper did not altogether comprehend the other's meaning, she knew he used a compliment, and as such was highly pleased with what he said; with increased animation, therefore, she cried, "It was always said of me, that I wanted nothing but opportunity to make quite a physician myself; so long as before I came to live with Harvey's father, they called me the petticoat doctor."

"More true than civil, I dare say," returned the surgeon, losing sight of the woman's character in his admiration of her respect for the healing art. "In the absence of more enlightened counselors, the experience of a discreet matron is frequently of great efficacy in checking the progress of disease; under such circumstances, madam, it is dreadful to have to contend with ignorance and obstinacy."

"Bad enough, as I well know from experience," cried Katy, in triumph: "Harvey is as obstinate about such things as a dumb beast; one would think the care I took of his bed-ridden father might learn him better than to despise good nursing. But some day he may know what it is to want a careful woman in his house, though now I am sure he is too despisable himself to have a house."

"Indeed, I can easily comprehend the mortification you must have felt in having one so self-willed to deal with," returned the surgeon, glancing his eyes reproachfully at his comrade; "but you should rise superior to such opinions, and pity the ignorance by which they are engendered."

The housekeeper hesitated a moment, at a loss to comprehend all that the surgeon expressed, yet she felt it was both complimentary and kind; therefore, suppressing her natural flow of language a little, she replied, —

"I tell Harvey his conduct is often condemnable, and last night he made my words good; but the opinions of such unbelievers is not very consequential; yet it is dreadful to think how he behaves at times: now, when he threw away the needle" —

"What!" said the surgeon, interrupting her, "does he affect to despise the needle? But it is my lot to meet with men, daily, who are equally perverse, and who show a still more culpable disrespect for the information that flows from the lights of science."

The doctor turned his face towards Captain Lawton while speaking, but the elevation of the head prevented his eyes from resting on the grave countenance maintained by the trooper. Katy listened with admiring attention, and when the other had done, she added, —

"Then Harvey is a disbeliever in the tides."

"Not believe in the tides!" repeated the healer of bodies in astonishment; "does the man distrust his senses? but perhaps it is the influence of the moon that he doubts."

"That he does!" exclaimed Katy, shaking with delight at meeting with a man of learning, who could support her favorite opinions. "If you was to hear him talk, you

would think he didn't believe there was such a thing as a moon at all."

"It is the misfortune of ignorance and incredulity, madam, that they feed themselves. The mind, once rejecting useful information, insensibly leans to superstition and conclusions on the order of nature, that are not less prejudicial to the cause of truth, than they are at variance with the first principles of human knowledge."

The spinster was too much awe-struck to venture an undigested reply to this speech; and the surgeon, after pausing a moment in a kind of philosophical disdain, continued, —

"That any man in his senses can doubt of the flux of the tides is more than I could have thought possible; yet obstinacy is a dangerous inmate to harbor, and may lead us into any error, however gross."

"You think, then, they have an effect on the flux?" said the housekeeper, inquiringly.

Miss Peyton rose and beckoned her nieces to give her their assistance in the adjoining pantry, while for a moment the dark visage of the attentive Lawton was lighted by an animation that vanished by an effort, as powerful, and as sudden, as the one that drew it into being.

After reflecting whether he rightly understood the meaning of the other, the surgeon, making due allowance for the love of learning, acting upon a want of education, replied, —

"The moon, you mean; many philosophers have doubted how far it affects the tides; but I think it is willfully rejecting the lights of science not to believe it causes both the flux and reflux."

As reflux was a disorder with which Katy was not acquainted, she thought it prudent to be silent; yet burning with curiosity to know the meaning of certain portentous lights to which the other so often alluded, she ventured to ask —

"If them lights he spoke of, were what was called northern lights in these parts?"

In charity to her ignorance, the surgeon would have en-

tered into an elaborate explanation of his meaning, had he not been interrupted by the mirth of Lawton. The trooper had listened so far with great composure; but now he laughed until his aching bones reminded him of his fall, and the tears rolled over his cheeks in larger drops than had ever been seen there before. At length the offended physician seized an opportunity of a pause to say, —

"To you, Captain Lawton, it may be a source of triumph, that an uneducated woman should make a mistake in a subject on which men of science have long been at variance; but yet you find this respectable matron does not reject the lights — does not reject the use of proper instruments in repairing injuries sustained by the human frame. You may possibly remember, sir, her allusion to the use of the needle."

"Aye," cried the delighted trooper, "to mend the pedler's breeches."

Katy drew up in evident displeasure, and prompt to vindicate her character for more lofty acquirements, she said, —

"'Twas not a common use that I put that needle to — but one of much greater virtue."

"Explain yourself, madam," said the surgeon impatiently, "that this gentleman may see how little reason he has for exultation."

Thus solicited, Katy paused to collect sufficient eloquence to garnish her narrative. The substance of her tale was, that a child who had been placed by the guardians of the poor in the keeping of Harvey, had, in the absence of its master, injured itself badly in the foot by a large needle. The offending instrument had been carefully greased, wrapped in woolen, and placed in a certain charmed nook of the chimney; while the foot, from a fear of weakening the incantation, was left in a state of nature. The arrival of the pedler had altered the whole of this admirable treatment; and the consequences were expressed by Katy, as she concluded her narrative, by saying, —

"'Twas no wonder the boy died of a lock-jaw!"

Doctor Sitgreaves looked out of the window in admiration of the brilliant morning, striving all he could to avoid the basilisk eyes of his comrade. He was impelled, by a feeling that he could not conquer, however, to look Captain Lawton in the face. The trooper had arranged every muscle of his countenance to express sympathy for the fate of the poor child; but the exultation of his eyes cut the astounded man of science to the quick; he muttered something concerning the condition of his patients, and retreated with precipitation.

Miss Peyton entered into the situation of things at the house of the pedler, with all the interest of her excellent feelings; she listened patiently while Katy recounted, more particularly, the circumstances of the past night as they had occurred. The spinster did not forget to dwell on the magnitude of the pecuniary loss sustained by Harvey, and in no manner spared her invectives, at his betraying a secret which might so easily have been kept.

"For, Miss Peyton," continued the housekeeper, after a pause to take breath, "I would have given up life before I would have given up that secret. At the most, they could only have killed him, and now a body may say that they have slain both soul and body; or, what's the same thing, they have made him a despisable vagabond. I wonder who he thinks would be his wife, or who would keep his house. For my part, my good name is too precious to be living with a lone man; though, for the matter of that, he is never there. I am resolved to tell him this day, that stay there a single woman, I will not an hour after the funeral; and marry him I don't think I will, unless he becomes steadier, and more of a home body."

The mild mistress of the Locusts suffered the exuberance of the housekeeper's feeling to expend itself, and then, by one or two judicious questions, that denoted a more intimate knowledge of the windings of the human heart in matters of Cupid, than might fairly be supposed to belong to a spinster, she extracted enough from Katy, to discover the improbability of Harvey's ever presuming to offer himself, with his broken fortunes, to the accept-

ance of Katharine Haynes. She therefore mentioned her own want of assistance in the present state of her household, and expressed a wish that Katy would change her residence to the Locusts, in case the pedler had no further use for her services. After a few preliminary conditions on the part of the wary housekeeper, the arrangement was concluded; and making a few more piteous lamentations on the weight of her own losses, and the stupidity of Harvey, united with some curiosity to know the future fate of the pedler, Katy withdrew to make the necessary preparations for the approaching funeral, which was to take place that day.

During the interview between the two females, Lawton, through delicacy, had withdrawn. Anxiety took him to the room of Captain Singleton. The character of this youth, it has already been shown, endeared him in a peculiar manner to every officer in the corps. The singularly mild deportment of the young dragoon had on so many occasions been proved not to proceed from want of resolution, that his almost feminine softness of manner and appearance had failed to bring him into disrepute, even in that band of partisan warriors.

To the major he was as dear as a brother, and his easy submission to the directions of his surgeon had made him a marked favorite with Dr. Sitgreaves. The rough usage the corps often received in its daring attacks, had brought each of its officers, in succession, under the temporary keeping of the surgeon. To Captain Singleton the man of science had decreed the palm of docility, on such occasions, and Captain Lawton he had fairly blackballed. He frequently declared, with unconquerable simplicity and earnestness of manner, that it gave him more pleasure to see the former brought in wounded than any officer in the squadron, and that the latter afforded him the least; a compliment and condemnation that were usually received by the first of the parties with a quiet smile of good nature, and by the last with a grave bow of thanks. On the present occasion, the mortified surgeon and exulting trooper met in the room of Captain Singleton, as a place

where they could act on common ground. Some time was occupied in joint attentions to the comfort of the wounded officer, and the doctor retired to an apartment prepared for his own accommodation; here, within a few minutes, he was surprised by the entrance of Lawton. The triumph of the trooper had been so complete, that he felt he could afford to be generous, and commencing by voluntarily throwing aside his coat, he cried carelessly, —

"Sitgreaves, administer a little of the aid of the lights of science to my body, if you please."

The surgeon was beginning to feel this was a subject that was intolerable, but venturing a glance towards his comrade, he saw with surprise the preparations he had made, and an air of sincerity about him, that was unusual to his manner when making such a request. Changing his intended burst of resentment to a tone of civil inquiry, he said, —

"Does Captain Lawton want anything at my hands?"

"Look for yourself, my dear sir," said the trooper mildly; "here seem to be most of the colors of the rainbow, on this shoulder."

"You have reason for saying so," said the other, handling the part with great tenderness and consummate skill; "but happily nothing is broken. It is wonderful how well you escaped!"

"I have been a tumbler from my youth, and I am past minding a few falls from a horse; but, Sitgreaves," he added with affection, and pointing to a scar on his body, "do you remember this bit of work?"

"Perfectly well, Jack; it was bravely obtained, and neatly extracted; but don't you think I had better apply an oil to these bruises?"

"Certainly," said Lawton, with unexpected condescension.

"Now, my dear boy," cried the doctor, exultingly, as he busied himself in applying the remedy to the hurts, "do you not think it would have been better to have done all this last night?"

"Quite probable."

"Yes, Jack, but if you had let me perform the operation of phlebotomy when I first saw you, it would have been of infinite service."

"No phlebotomy," said the other, positively.

"It is now too late; but a dose of oil would carry off the humors famously."

To this the captain made no reply, but grated his teeth, in a way that showed the fortress of his mouth was not to be assailed without a resolute resistance; and the experienced physician changed the subject by saying, —

"It is a pity, John, that you did not catch the rascal, after the danger and trouble you incurred."

The captain of dragoons made no reply; and, while placing some bandages on the wounded shoulder, the surgeon continued, —

"If I have any wish at all to destroy human life, it is to have the pleasure of seeing that traitor hanged."

"I thought your business was to cure, and not to slay," said the trooper, dryly.

"Aye! but he has caused us such heavy losses by his information, that I sometimes feel a very unsophistical temper towards that spy."

"You should not encourage such feelings of animosity to any of your fellow-creatures," returned Lawton, in a tone that caused the operator to drop a pin he was arranging in the bandages from his hand. He looked the patient in the face to remove all doubts of his identity: finding, however, it was his old comrade, Captain John Lawton, who had spoken, he rallied his astonished faculties, and proceeded by saying, —

"Your doctrine is just, and in general I subscribe to it. But, John, my dear fellow, is the bandage easy?"

"Quite."

"I agree with you as a whole; but as matter is infinitely divisible, so no case exists without an exception. Lawton, do you feel easy?"

"Very."

"It is not only cruel to the sufferer, but sometimes unjust to others, to take human life where a less punishment

would answer the purpose. Now, Jack, if you were only — move your arm a little — if you were only — I hope you feel easier, my dear friend?"

"Much."

"If, my dear John, you would teach your men to cut with more discretion, it would answer you the same purpose — and give me great pleasure."

The doctor drew a heavy sigh, as he was enabled to get rid of what was nearest to the heart; and the dragoon coolly replaced his coat, saying with great deliberation as he retired, —

"I know no troop that cut more judiciously; they generally shave from the crown to the jaw."

The disappointed operator collected his instruments, and with a heavy heart proceeded to pay a visit to the room of Colonel Wellmere.

CHAPTER XII.

> This fairy form contains a soul as mighty
> As that which lives within a giant's frame;
> These slender limbs, that tremble like the aspen
> At summer evening's sigh, uphold a spirit,
> Which, roused, can tower to the height of heaven,
> And light those shining windows of the face
> With much of heaven's own radiance.
>
> Duo.

The number and character of her guests had greatly added to the cares of Miss Jeanette Peyton. The morning found them all restored, in some measure, to their former ease of body, with the exception of the youthful captain of dragoons, who had been so deeply regretted by Dunwoodie. The wound of this officer was severe, though the surgeon persevered in saying that it was without danger. His comrade, we have shown, had deserted his couch; and Henry Wharton awoke from a sleep that had been undisturbed by anything but a dream of suffering amputation under the hands of a surgical novice. As it proved, however, to be nothing but a dream, the youth found himself much refreshed by his slumbers: and Dr. Sitgreaves removed all further apprehensions by confidently pronouncing that he would be a well man within a fortnight.

During all this time Colonel Wellmere did not make his appearance; he breakfasted in his own room, and, notwithstanding certain significant smiles of the man of science, declared himself too much injured to rise from his bed. Leaving him, therefore, endeavoring to conceal his chagrin in the solitude of his chamber, the surgeon proceeded to the more grateful task of sitting an hour by the bedside of George Singleton. A slight flush was on the face of the patient as the doctor entered the room;

and the latter advanced promptly, and laid his fingers on the pulse of the youth, beckoning to him to be silent, while he muttered to himself,—

"Growing symptoms of a febrile pulse — no, no, my dear George, you must remain quiet and dumb; though your eyes look better, and your skin has even a moisture."

"Nay, my dear Sitgreaves," said the youth taking his hand, "you see there is no fever about me: look, is there any of Jack Lawton's hoar-frost on my tongue?"

"No, indeed," said the surgeon, clapping a spoon in the mouth of the other, forcing it open, and looking down his throat as if disposed to visit the interior in person; "the tongue is well, and the pulse begins to lower again. Ah! the bleeding did you good. Phlebotomy is a sovereign specific for southern constitutions. But that madcap Lawton absolutely refused to be blooded for a fall he had from his horse last night. Why, George, your case is becoming singular," continued the doctor, instinctively throwing aside his wig; "your pulse even and soft, your skin moist, but your eye fiery, and cheek flushed. Oh! I must examine more closely into these symptoms."

"Softly, my good friend, softly," said the youth, falling back on his pillow, and losing some of that color which alarmed his companion; "I believe, in extracting the ball, you did for me all that is required. I am free from pain, and only weak, I do assure you."

"Captain Singleton," said the surgeon, with heat, "it is presumptuous in you to pretend to tell your medical attendant when you are free from pain: if it be not to enable us to decide in such matters, of what avail the lights of science? For shame, George, for shame! even that perverse fellow, John Lawton, could not behave with more obstinacy."

His patient smiled, as he gently repulsed his physician in an attempt to undo the bandages, and with a returning glow to his cheeks, inquired, —

"Do, Archibald," — a term of endearment that seldom failed to soften the operator's heart, — "tell me what

spirit from heaven has been gliding around my apartment, while I lay pretending to sleep?"

"If any one interferes with my patients," cried the doctor, hastily, "I will teach them, spirit or no spirit, what it is to meddle with another man's concerns."

"Tut — my dear fellow, there was no interference made, nor any intended; see," exhibiting the bandages, "everything is as you left it, — but it glided about the room with the grace of a fairy, and the tenderness of an angel."

The surgeon having satisfied himself that everything was as he had left it, very deliberately resumed his seat and replaced his wig, as he inquired, with a brevity that would have honored Lieutenant Mason, —

"Had it petticoats, George?"

"I saw nothing but its heavenly eyes — its bloom — its majestic step — its grace," replied the young man, with rather more ardor than his surgeon thought consistent with his debilitated condition; and he laid his hand on his mouth to stop him, saying himself, —

"It must have been Miss Jeanette Peyton — a lady of fine accomplishments, with — hem — with something of the kind of step you speak of — a very complacent eye; and as to the bloom, I dare say offices of charity can summon as fine a color to her cheeks, as glows in the faces of her more youthful nieces."

"Nieces! has she nieces, then? The angel I saw may be a daughter, a sister, or a niece, — but never an aunt."

"Hush, George, hush; your talking has brought your pulse up again. You must observe quiet, and prepare for a meeting with your own sister, who will be here within an hour."

"What, Isabella! and who sent for her?"

"The major."

"Considerate Dunwoodie!" murmured the exhausted youth, sinking again on his pillow, where the commands of his attendant compelled him to remain silent.

Even Captain Lawton had been received with many and courteous inquiries after the state of his health, from

all the members of the family, when he made his morning entrance; but an invisible spirit presided over the comforts of the English colonel. Sarah had shrunk with consciousness from entering the room; yet she knew the position of every glass, and had, with her own hands, supplied the contents of every bowl, that stood on his table.

At the time of our tale, we were a divided people, and Sarah thought it was no more than her duty to cherish the institutions of that country to which she yet clung as the land of her forefathers; but there were other and more cogent reasons for the silent preference she was giving to the Englishman. His image had first filled the void in her youthful fancy, and it was an image that was distinguished by many of those attractions that can enchain a female heart. It is true, he wanted the personal excellence of Peyton Dunwoodie, but his pretensions were far from contemptible. Sarah had moved about the house during the morning, casting frequent and longing glances at the door of Wellmere's apartment, anxious to learn the condition of his wounds, and yet ashamed to inquire; conscious interest kept her tongue tied, until her sister, with the frankness of innocence, had put the desired question to Dr. Sitgreaves.

"Colonel Wellmere," said the operator, gravely, "is in what I call a state of free-will, madam. He is ill, or he is well, as he pleases. His case, young lady, exceeds my art to heal; and I take it Sir Henry Clinton is the best adviser he can apply to; though Major Dunwoodie has made the communication with his leech rather difficult."

Frances smiled, but averted her face, while Sarah moved, with the grace of an offended Juno, from the apartment. Her own room, however, afforded her but little relief, and in passing through the long gallery that communicated with each of the chambers of the building, she noticed the door of Singleton's room to be open. The wounded youth seemed sleeping, and was alone. She had ventured lightly into the apartment, and busied herself for a few minutes in arranging the tables, and the nourishment provided for the patient, hardly conscious of what

she was doing, and possibly dreaming that these little feminine offices were performed for another. Her natural bloom was heightened by the insinuation of the surgeon, nor was the lustre of her eye in any degree diminished. The sound of the approaching footstep of Sitgreaves hastened her retreat down a private stairway, to the side of her sister. The sisters then sought the fresh air on the piazza; and as they pursued their walk, arm in arm, the following dialogue took place: —

"There is something disagreeable about this surgeon of Dunwoodie," said Sarah, "that causes me to wish him away most heartily."

Frances fixed her laughing eyes on her sister; but forbearing to speak, the other readily construed their expression, and hastily added, "But I forget he is one of your renowned corps of Virginians, and must be spoken of reverently."

"As respectfully as you please, my dear sister; there is but little danger of exceeding the truth."

"Not in your opinion," said the elder, with a little warmth; "but I think Mr. Dunwoodie has taken a liberty that exceeds the rights of consanguinity; he has made our father's house a hospital."

"We ought to be grateful that none of the patients it contains are dearer to us."

"Your brother is one."

"True, true," interrupted Frances, blushing to the eyes; "but he leaves his room, and thinks his wound lightly purchased by the pleasure of being with his friends. If," she added, with a tremulous lip, "this dreadful suspicion that is affixed to his visit were removed, I could consider his wound of little moment."

"You now have the fruits of rebellion brought home to you; a brother wounded and a prisoner, and perhaps a victim; your father distressed, his privacy interrupted, and not improbably his estates torn from him, on account of his loyalty to his king."

Frances continued her walk in silence. While facing the northern entrance to the vale, her eyes were uniformly

fastened on the point where the road was suddenly lost by the intervention of a hill; and at each turn, as she lost sight of the spot, she lingered until an impatient movement of her sister quickened her pace to an even motion with that of her own. At length, a single horse chaise was seen making its way carefully among the stones which lay scattered over the country road that wound through the valley, and approached the cottage. The color of Frances changed as the vehicle gradually drew nearer; and when she was enabled to see a female form in it by the side of a black in livery, her limbs shook with an agitation that compelled her to lean on Sarah for support. In a few minutes the travellers approached the gate. It was thrown open by a dragoon who followed the carriage, and who had been the messenger dispatched by Dunwoodie to the father of Captain Singleton. Miss Peyton advanced to receive their guest, and the sisters united in giving her the kindest welcome; still Frances could with difficulty withdraw her truant eyes from the countenance of their visitor. She was young, and of a light and fragile form, but of exquisite proportions. Her eye was large, full, black, piercing, and at times a little wild. Her hair was luxuriant, and as it was without the powder it was then the fashion to wear, it fell in raven blackness. A few of its locks had fallen on her cheek, giving its chilling whiteness by the contrast a more deadly character. Dr. Sitgreaves supported her from the chaise; and when she gained the floor of the piazza, she turned an expressive look on the face of the practitioner.

"Your brother is out of danger, and wishes to see you, Miss Singleton," said the surgeon.

The lady burst into a flood of tears. Frances had stood contemplating the action and face of Isabella with a kind of uneasy admiration, but she now sprang to her side with the ardor of a sister, and kindly drawing her arm within her own, led the way to a retired room. The movement was so ingenuous, so considerate, and so delicate, that even Miss Peyton withheld her interference, following the youthful pair with only her eyes and a smile of

complacency. The feeling was communicated to all the spectators, and they dispersed in pursuit of their usual avocations. Isabella yielded to the gentle influence of Frances without resistance; and, having gained the room where the latter conducted her, wept in silence on the shoulder of the observant and soothing girl, until Frances thought her tears exceeded the emotion natural to the occasion. The sobs of Miss Singleton for a time were violent and uncontrollable, until, with an evident exertion, she yielded to a kind observation of her companion, and succeeded in suppressing her tears. Raising her face to the eyes of Frances, she rose, while a smile of beautiful radiance passed over her features; and making a hasty apology for the excess of her emotion, she desired to be conducted to the room of the invalid."

The meeting between the brother and sister was warm, but, by an effort on the part of the lady, more composed than her previous agitation had given reason to expect. Isabella found her brother looking better, and in less danger than her sensitive imagination had led her to suppose. Her spirits rose in proportion; from despondency, she passed to something like gayety; her beautiful eyes sparkled with renovated brilliancy; and her face was lighted with smiles so fascinating, that Frances, who, in compliance with her earnest entreaties, had accompanied her to the sick chamber, sat gazing on a countenance that possessed so wonderful variability, impelled by a charm that was beyond her control. The youth had thrown an earnest look at Frances, as soon as his sister raised herself from his arms, and perhaps it was the first glance at the lovely lineaments of our heroine, when the gazer turned his eyes from the view in disappointment. He seemed bewildered, rubbed his forehead like a man awaking from a dream, and mused.

"Where is Dunwoodie, Isabella?" he said; "the excellent fellow is never weary of kind actions. After a day of such service as that of yesterday, he has spent the night in bringing me a nurse, whose presence alone is able to raise me from my couch."

The expression of the lady's countenance changed; her eye roved round the apartment with a character of wildness in it that repelled the anxious Frances, who studied her movements with unabated interest.

"Dunwoodie! is he then not here? I thought to have met him by the side of my brother's bed."

"He has duties that require his presence elsewhere: the English are said to be out by the way of the Hudson, and they give us light troops but little rest: surely nothing else could have kept him so long from a wounded friend. But, Isabella, the meeting has been too much for you; you tremble."

Isabella made no reply: she stretched her hand towards the table which held the nourishment of the captain, and the attentive Frances comprehended her wishes in a moment. A glass of water in some measure revived the sister, who was enabled to say, —

"Doubtless it is his duty. 'Twas said above, a royal party was moving on the river; though I passed the troops but two miles from this spot." The latter part of the sentence was hardly audible, and it was spoken more in the manner of a soliloquy, than as if intended for the ears of her companions.

"On the march, Isabella?" eagerly inquired her brother.

"No, dismounted, and seemingly at rest;" was the reply.

The wondering dragoon turned his gaze on the countenance of his sister, who sat with her eye bent on the carpet in unconscious absence, but found no explanation. His look was changed to the face of Frances, who, startled by the earnestness of his expression, arose, and hastily inquired if he would have any assistance.

"If you can pardon the rudeness," said the wounded officer, making a feeble effort to raise his body, "I would request to have Captain Lawton's company for a moment."

Frances hastened instantly to communicate his wish to that gentleman, and, impelled by an interest she could not

control, she returned again to her seat by the side of Miss Singleton.

"Lawton," said the youth, impatiently, as the trooper entered, "hear you from the major?"

The eye of the sister was now bent on the face of the trooper, who made his salutations to the lady with ease, blended with the frankness of a soldier.

"His man has been here twice," he said, "to inquire how we fared in the Lazaretto."

"And why not himself?"

"That is a question the major can answer best; but you know the red-coats are abroad, and Dunwoodie commands in the county; these English must be looked to."

"True," said Singleton, slowly, as if struck with the other's reasons; "but how is it that you are idle, when there is work to do?"

"My sword arm is not in the best condition, and Roanoke has but a shambling gait this morning; besides, there is another reason I could mention, if it were not that Miss Wharton would never forgive me."

"Speak, I beg, without dread of my displeasure," said Frances, returning the good-humored smile of the trooper, with the archness natural to her own sweet face.

"The odors of your kitchen, then," cried Lawton bluntly, "forbid my quitting the domains, until I qualify myself to speak with more certainty concerning the fatness of the land."

"Oh! aunt Jeanette is exerting herself to do credit to my father's hospitality," said the laughing girl, "and I am a truant from her labors, as I shall be a stranger to her favor, unless I proffer my assistance."

Frances withdrew to seek her aunt, musing deeply on the character and extreme sensibility of the new acquaintance chance had brought to the cottage.

The wounded officer followed her with his eyes, as she moved, with infantile grace, through the door of his apartment, and as she vanished from his view, he observed, —

"Such an aunt and niece are seldom to be met with, Jack; this seems a fairy, but the aunt is angelic."

"You are doing well, I see; your enthusiasm for the sex holds its own."

"I should be ungrateful as well as insensible, did I not bear testimony to the loveliness of Miss Peyton."

"A good motherly lady, but as to love, that is a matter of taste. A few years younger, with deference to her prudence and experience, would accord better with my fancy."

"She must be under twenty," said the other, quickly.

"It depends on the way you count. If you begin at the heel of life, well; but if you reckon downward, as is most common, I think she is nearer forty."

"You have mistaken an elder sister for the aunt," said Isabella, laying her fair hand on the mouth of the invalid; "you must be silent! your feelings are beginning to affect your frame."

The entrance of Dr. Sitgreaves, who, in some alarm, noticed the increase of feverish symptoms in his patient, enforced this mandate; and the trooper withdrew to pay a visit of condolence to Roanoke, who had been an equal sufferer with himself in their last night's somerset. To his great joy, his man pronounced the steed to be equally convalescent with the master; and Lawton found that by dint of rubbing the animal's limbs several hours without ceasing, he was enabled to place his feet in what he called systematic motion. Orders were accordingly given to be in readiness to rejoin the troop at the Four Corners, as soon as his master had shared in the bounty of the approaching banquet.

In the mean time, Henry Wharton entered the apartment of Wellmere, and by his sympathy succeeded in restoring the colonel to his own good graces. The latter was consequently enabled to rise, and prepared to meet a rival of whom he had spoken so lightly, and, as the result had proved, with so little reason. Wharton knew that their misfortune, as they both termed their defeat, was owing to the other's rashness; but he forbore to speak of anything except the unfortunate accident which had deprived the English of their leader, and to which he good-naturedly ascribed their subsequent discomfiture.

"In short, Wharton," said the colonel, putting one leg out of bed, "it may be called a combination of untoward events; your own ungovernable horse prevented my orders from being carried to the major, in season to flank the rebels."

"Very true," replied the captain, kicking a slipper towards the bed; "had we succeeded in getting a few good fires upon them in flank, we should have sent these brave Virginians to the right about."

"Aye, and that in double quick time," cried the colonel, making the other leg follow its companion; "then it was necessary to rout the guides, you know, and the movement gave them the best possible opportunity to charge."

"Yes," said the other, sending the second slipper after the first; "and this Major Dunwoodie never overlooks an advantage."

"I think if we had the thing to do over again," continued the colonel, raising himself on his feet, "we might alter the case very materially, though the chief thing the rebels have now to boast of is my capture: they were repulsed, you saw, in their attempt to drive us from the wood."

"At least they would have been, had they made an attack," said the captain, throwing the rest of his clothes within reach of the colonel.

"Why, that is the same thing," returned Wellmere, beginning to dress himself; "to assume such an attitude as to intimidate your enemy, is the chief art of war."

"Doubtless, then, you may remember in one of their charges they were completely routed."

"True — true," cried the colonel, with animation: "had I been there to have improved that advantage, we might have turned the table on the Yankees;" saying which he displayed still greater animation in completing his toilette; and he was soon prepared to make his appearance, fully restored to his own good opinion, and fairly persuaded that his capture was owing to casualties absolutely beyond the control of man.

The knowledge that Colonel Wellmere was to be a

guest at the table, in no degree diminished the preparations which were already making for the banquet; and Sarah, after receiving the compliments of the gentleman, and making many kind inquiries after the state of his wounds, proceeded in person to lend her counsel and taste to one of those labored entertainments, which, at that day, were so frequent in country life, and which are not entirely banished from our domestic economy at the present moment.

CHAPTER XIII.

I will stand to and feed,
Although my last.

TEMPEST.

THE savor of preparation which had been noticed by Captain Lawton, began to increase within the walls of the cottage: certain sweet-smelling odors, that arose from the subterranean territories of Cæsar, gave to the trooper the most pleasing assurances that his olfactory nerves, which on such occasions were as acute as his eyes on others, had faithfully performed their duty; and for the benefit of enjoying the passing sweets as they arose, the dragoon so placed himself at a window of the building, that not a vapor charged with the spices of the East could exhale on its passage to the clouds, without first giving its incense to his nose. Lawton, however, by no means indulged himself in this comfortable arrangement, without first making such preparations to do meet honor to the feast, as his scanty wardrobe would allow. The uniform of his corps was always a passport to the best tables, and this, though somewhat tarnished by faithful service and unceremonious usage, was properly brushed and decked out for the occasion. His head, which nature had ornamented with the blackness of a crow, now shone with the whiteness of snow; and his bony hand, that so well became the sabre, peered from beneath a ruffle with something like maiden coyness. The improvements of the dragoon went no further, excepting that his boots shone with more than holiday splendor, and his spurs glittered in the rays of the sun, as became the pure ore of which they were composed.

Cæsar moved through the apartments with a face charged with an importance exceeding even that which had accom-

panied him in his melancholy task of the morning. The black had early returned from the errand on which he had been dispatched by the pedler, and, obedient to the commands of his mistress, promptly appeared to give his services where his allegiance was due; so serious, indeed, was his duty now becoming, that it was only at odd moments he was enabled to impart to his sable brother, who had been sent in attendance on Miss Singleton to the Locusts, any portion of the wonderful incidents of the momentous night he had so lately passed. By ingeniously using, however, such occasions as accidentally offered, Cæsar communicated so many of the heads of his tale, as served to open the eyes of his visitor to their fullest width. The gusto for the marvelous was innate in these sable worthies; and Miss Peyton found it necessary to interpose her authority, in order to postpone the residue of the history to a more befitting opportunity.

"Ah! Miss Jinnett," said Cæsar, shaking his head, and looking all that he expressed, "'twas awful to see Johnny Birch walk on a feet when he lie dead!"

This concluded the conversation; though the black promised himself the satisfaction, and did not fail to enjoy it, of having many a good gossip on the solemn subject at a future period.

The ghost thus happily laid, the department of Miss Peyton flourished; and by the time the afternoon's sun had travelled a two hours' journey from the meridian, the formal procession from the kitchen to the parlor commenced, under the auspices of Cæsar, who led the van, supporting a turkey on the palms of his withered hands, with the dexterity of a balance-master.

Next followed the servant of Captain Lawton, bearing, as he marched stiffly, and walking wide, as if allowing room for his steed, a ham of true Virginian flavor; a present from the spinster's brother in Accomac. The supporter of this savory dish kept his eye on his trust with military precision; and by the time he reached his destination, it might be difficult to say which contained the most juice, his own mouth or the Accomac bacon.

Third in the line was to be seen the valet of Colonel Wellmere, who carried in either hand chickens fricasseed, and oyster patties.

After him marched the attendant of Dr. Sitgreaves, who had instinctively seized an enormous tureen, as most resembling matters he understood, and followed on in place, until the steams of the soup so completely bedimmed the spectacles he wore, as a badge of office, that, on arriving at the scene of action, he was compelled to deposit his freight on the floor, until, by removing the glasses, he could see his way through the piles of reserved china and plate-warmers.

Next followed another trooper, whose duty it was to attend on Captain Singleton; and, as if apportioning his appetite to the feeble state of his master, he had contented himself with conveying a pair of ducks, roasted, until their tempting fragrance began to make him repent his having so lately demolished a breakfast that had been provided for his master's sister, with another prepared for himself.

The white boy, who belonged to the house, brought up the rear, groaning under the load of sundry dishes of vegetables, that the cook, by way of climax, had unwittingly heaped on him.

But this was far from all of the preparations for that day's feast; Cæsar had no sooner deposited his bird, which, but the week before, had been flying amongst the highlands of Dutchess, little dreaming of so soon heading such a goodly assemblage, than he turned mechanically on his heel, and took up his line of march again for the kitchen. In this evolution the black was imitated by his companions in succession, and another procession to the parlor followed in the same order. By this admirable arrangement, whole flocks of pigeons, certain bevies of quails, shoals of flat-fish, bass, and sundry woodcock, found their way into the presence of the company.

A third attack brought suitable quantities of potatoes, onions, beets, cold-slaw, rice, and all the other minutiæ of a goodly dinner.

The board now fairly groaned with American profusion

and Cæsar, glancing his eye over the show with a most approving conscience, after readjusting every dish that had not been placed on the table with his own hands, proceeded to acquaint the mistress of the revels that his task was happily accomplished.

Some half-hour before the culinary array just recorded took place, all the ladies disappeared, much in the same unaccountable manner that swallows flee the approach of winter. But the spring-time of their return had arrived, and the whole party were collected in an apartment that, in consequence of its containing no side-table, and being furnished with a chintz coverlet settee, was termed a withdrawing-room.

The kind-hearted spinster had deemed the occasion worthy, not only of extraordinary preparations in the culinary department, but had seen proper to deck her own person in garments suited to the guests whom it was now her happiness to entertain.

On her head Miss Peyton wore a cap of exquisite lawn, which was ornamented in front with a broad border of lace, that spread from the face in such a manner as to admit of a display of artificial flowers, clustered in a group on the summit of her fine forehead.

The color of her hair was lost in the profusion of powder with which it was covered; but a slight curling of the extremities in some degree relieved the formality of its arrangement, and gave a look of feminine softness to the features.

Her dress was a rich, heavy silk, of violet color, cut low around the bust, with a stomacher of the same material, that fitted close to the figure, and exhibited the form, from the shoulders to the waist, in its true proportions. Below, the dress was full, and sufficiently showed that parsimony in attire was not a foible of the day. A small loop displayed the beauty of the fabric to advantage, and aided in giving majesty to the figure.

The tall stature of the lady was heightened by shoes of the same material with the dress, whose heels added more than an inch to the liberality of nature.

The sleeves were short, and close to the limb, until they fell off at the elbows in large ruffles, that hung in rich profusion from the arm when extended; and duplicates and triplicates of lawn, trimmed with Dresden lace, lent their aid in giving delicacy to a hand and arm that yet retained their whiteness and symmetry. A treble row of large pearls closely encircled her throat; and a handkerchief of lace partially concealed that part of the person that the silk had left exposed, but which the experience of forty years had warned Miss Peyton should now be veiled.

Thus attired, and standing erect with the lofty grace that distinguished the manners of that day, the maiden would have looked into nothingness a bevy of modern belles.

The taste of Sarah had kept even pace with the decorations of her aunt; and a dress, differing in no respect from the one just described, but in material and tints, exhibited her imposing form to equal advantage. The satin of her robe was of a pale bluish color. Twenty years did not, however, require the screen that was prudent in forty, and nothing but an envious border of exquisite lace hid, in some measure, what the satin left exposed to view. The upper part of the bust, and the fine fall of the shoulders, were blazing in all their native beauty, and, like the aunt, the throat was ornamented by a treble row of pearls, to correspond with which were rings of the same quality in the ears. The head was without a cap, and the hair drawn up from the countenance so as to give to the eye all the loveliness of a forehead as polished as marble and as white as snow. A few straggling curls fell gracefully on the neck, and a bouquet of artificial flowers was also placed, like a coronet, over her brow.

Miss Singleton had resigned her brother to the advice of Dr. Sitgreaves, who had succeeded in getting his patient into a deep sleep, after quieting certain feverish symptoms that followed the agitation of the interview. The sister was persuaded, by the observant mistress of the mansion, to make one of the party, and she sat by the side of Sarah, differing but little in appearance from that lady, except in

refusing the use of powder on her raven locks, and that her unusually high forehead, and large, brilliant eyes, gave an expression of thoughtfulness to her features, that was possibly heightened by the paleness of her cheek.

Last and least, but not the most unlovely, in this display of female charms, was the youngest daughter of Mr. Wharton. Frances, we have already mentioned, left the city before she had attained to the age of fashionable womanhood. A few adventurous spirits were already beginning to make inroads in those customs which had so long invaded the comforts of the fair sex; and the youthful girl had ventured to trust her beauty to the height which nature had bestowed. This was but little, but that little was a masterpiece. Frances several times had determined, in the course of the morning, to bestow more than usual pains in the decoration of her person. Each time, in succession, as she formed this resolution, she spent a few minutes in looking earnestly towards the north, and then she as invariably changed it.

At the appointed hour, our heroine appeared in the drawing-room, clothed in a robe of pale blue silk, of a cut and fashion much like that worn by her sister. Her hair was left to the wild curls of nature, its exuberance being confined to the crown of her head by a long, low comb, made of light tortoise-shell; a color barely distinguishable in the golden hue of her tresses. Her dress was without a plait or a wrinkle, and fitted the form with an exactitude that might lead one to imagine the arch girl more than suspected the beauties it displayed. A tucker of rich Dresden lace softened the contour of the figure. Her head was without ornament; but around her throat was a necklace of gold clasped in front with a rich cornelian.

Once, and once only, as they moved towards the repast, did Lawton see a foot thrust itself from beneath the folds of her robe, and exhibit its little beauties encased in a slipper of blue silk, clasped close to the shape by a buckle of brilliants. The trooper caught himself sighing as he thought, though it was good for nothing in the stirrup, how enchantingly it would grace a minuet.

As the black appeared on the threshold of the room,

making a low reverence, which has been interpreted for some centuries into "dinner waits," Mr. Wharton, clad in a dress of drab, bedecked with enormous buttons, advanced formally to Miss Singleton, and bending his powdered head nearly to the level of the hand he extended, received hers in return.

Dr. Sitgreaves offered the same homage to Miss Peyton, and met with equal favor; the lady first pausing to draw on her gloves.

Colonel Wellmere was honored with a smile from Sarah, while performing a similar duty; and Frances gave the ends of her taper fingers to Captain Lawton with maiden bashfulness.

Much time, and some trouble, were expended before the whole party were, to the great joy of Cæsar, comfortably arranged around the table, with proper attention to all points of etiquette and precedence. The black well knew the viands were not improving; and though abundantly able to comprehend the disadvantage of eating a cold dinner, it greatly exceeded his powers of philosophy to weigh all the latent consequences to society which depend on social order.

For the first ten minutes all but the captain of dragoons found themselves in a situation much to their liking. Even Lawton would have been perfectly happy, had not excess of civility on the part of his host and Miss Jeanette Peyton, kept him from the more agreeable occupation of tasting dishes he did want, in order to decline those he did not. At length, however, the repast was fairly commenced, and a devoted application to the viands was more eloquent than a thousand words in favor of Dinah's skill.

Next came drinking with the ladies; but as the wine was excellent, and the glasses ample, the trooper bore this interruption with consummate good nature. Nay, so fearful was he of giving offense, and of omitting any of the nicer points of punctilio, that having commenced this courtesy with the lady who sat next him, he persevered until not one of his fair companions could, with justice, reproach him with partiality in this particular.

Long abstemiousness from anything like generous wine might plead the excuse of Captain Lawton, especially when exposed to so strong a temptation as that now before him. Mr. Wharton had been one of a set of politicians in New York, whose principal exploits before the war had been to assemble, and pass sage opinions on the signs of the times, under the inspiration of certain liquor made from a grape that grew on the south side of the island of Madeira, and which found its way into the colonies of North America through the medium of the West Indies, sojourning awhile in the Western Archipelago, by way of proving the virtues of the climate. A large supply of this cordial had been drawn from his storehouse in the city, and some of it now sparkled in a bottle before the captain, blushing in the rays of the sun, which were passing obliquely through it, like amber.

Though the meat and vegetables had made their entrance with perfect order and propriety, their exeunt was affected much in the manner of a retreat of militia. The point was to clear the board something after the fabled practice of the harpies, and by dint of scrambling, tossing, breaking, and spilling, the remnants of the overflowing repast disappeared. And now another series of processions commenced, by virtue of which, a goodly display of pastry, with its usual accompaniments, garnished the table.

Mr. Wharton poured out a glass of wine for the lady who sat on his right hand, and, pushing the bottle to a guest, said, with a low bow, —

"We are to be honored with a toast from Miss Singleton."

Although there was nothing more in this movement than occurred every day on such occasions, yet the lady trembled, colored, and grew pale again, seemingly endeavoring to rally her thoughts, until, by her agitation, she had excited the interest of the whole party; when by an effort, and in a manner as if she had striven in vain to think of another, Isabella said, faintly, —

"Major Dunwoodie."

The health was drunk cheerfully by all but Colonel Well-

mere, who wet his lips, and drew figures on the table with some of the liquor he had spilt.

At length Colonel Wellmere broke silence by saying aloud to Captain Lawton, —

"I suppose, sir, this Mr. Dunwoodie will receive promotion in the rebel army, for the advantage my misfortune gave him over my command."

The trooper had supplied the wants of nature to his perfect satisfaction; and, perhaps, with the exception of Washington and his immediate commander, there was no mortal whose displeasure he regarded a tittle. First helping himself, therefore, to a little of his favorite bottle, he replied with admirable coolness, —

"Colonel Wellmere, your pardon; Major Dunwoodie owes his allegiance to the confederated states of North America, and where he owes it, he pays it. Such a man is no rebel. Promoted I hope he may be, both because he deserves it, and because I am next in rank in the corps; and I know not what you call a misfortune, unless you deem meeting the Virginia horse as such."

"We will not differ about terms, sir," said the colonel, haughtily; "I spoke as duty to my sovereign prompted: but do you not call the loss of a commander a misfortune to a party?"

"It certainly may be so," said the trooper, with emphasis.

"Miss Peyton, will you favor us with a toast?" cried the master of the house, anxious to stop this dialogue.

The lady bowed her head with dignity, as she named "General Montrose;" and the long-absent bloom stole lightly over her features.

"There is no term more doubtful than that word misfortune," said the surgeon, regardless of the nice manœuvres of the host; "some deem one thing a misfortune, others its opposite: misfortune begets misfortune: life is a misfortune, for it may be the means of enduring misfortune; and death is a misfortune, as it abridges the enjoyments of life."

"It is a misfortune that our mess has no such wine as this," interrupted the trooper.

"We will pledge you a sentiment in it, sir, as it seems to suit your taste," said Mr. Wharton.

Lawton filled to the brim, and drank, "A speedy peace, or a stirring war."

"I drink your toast, Captain Lawton, though I greatly distrust your construction of activity," said the surgeon. "In my poor judgment, cavalry should be kept in the rear, to improve a victory, and not sent in front to gain it. Such may be said to be their natural occupation, if the term can be used in reference to so artificial a body; for all history shows that the horse have done most when properly held in reserve."

This dissertation, uttered in a sufficiently didactic manner, was a hint that Miss Peyton did not neglect. She arose and retired, followed by her juniors.

Nearly at the same moment, Mr. Wharton and his son made an apology for their absence, which was required on account of the death of a near neighbor, and withdrew.

The retreat of the ladies was the signal for the appearance of the surgeon's cigar, which, being established in a corner of his mouth, in a certain knowing way, caused not the slightest interruption to his discourse —

"If anything can sweeten captivity and wounds, it must be the happiness of suffering in the society of the ladies who have left us," gallantly observed the colonel, as he resumed his seat after closing the door.

"Sympathy and kindness have their influence on the human system," returned the surgeon, knocking the ashes from his cigar, with the tip of a little finger, in the manner of an adept. "The connection is intimate between the moral and physical feelings; but still, to accomplish a cure, and restore nature to the healthy tone it has lost from disease or accident, requires more than can flow from unguided sympathies. In such cases, the lights" — the surgeon accidentally caught the eye of the trooper and he paused. Taking two or three hasty puffs, he essayed to finish the sentence: "In such cases, the knowledge that flows from the lights" —

"You were saying, sir," — said Colonel Wellmere, sipping his wine, —

"The purport of my remark went to say," continued Sitgreaves, turning his back on Lawton, "that a bread poultice would not set a broken arm."

"More is the pity," cried the trooper, "for next to eating, the nourishment could not be more innocently applied."

"To you, Colonel Wellmere," said the surgeon, "as a man of education, I can with safety appeal." The colonel bowed. "You must have observed the dreadful havoc made in your ranks by the men who were led by this gentleman;" the colonel looked grave, again; "how, when blows lighted on their frames, life was invariably extinguished, beyond all hope of scientific reparation: how certain yawning wounds were inflicted, that must set at defiance the art of the most experienced practitioner; now, sir, to you I triumphantly appeal, therefore, to know whether your detachment would not have been as effectually defeated, if the men had all lost a right arm, for instance, as if they had all lost their heads."

"The triumph of your appeal is somewhat hasty, sir," said Wellmere.

"Is the cause of liberty advanced a step by such injudicious harshness in the field?" continued the surgeon, bent on the favorite principle of his life.

"I am yet to learn that the cause of liberty is in any manner advanced by the services of any gentleman in the rebel army," rejoined the colonel.

"Not liberty! Good God, for what then are we contending?"

"Slavery, sir; yes, even slavery; you are putting the tyranny of a mob on the throne of a kind and lenient prince; where is the consistency of your boasted liberty?"

"Consistency!" repeated the surgeon, looking about him a little wildly, at hearing such sweeping charges against a cause he had so long thought holy.

"Aye, sir, your consistency. Your congress of sages have published a manifesto, wherein they set forth the equality of political rights."

"'Tis true, and it is done most ably."

"I say nothing of its ability; but if true, why not set

your slaves at liberty?" This argument, which is thought by most of the colonel's countrymen a triumphant answer to a thousand eloquent facts, lost none of its weight by the manner in which it was uttered.

Every American feels humbled at the necessity of vindicating his country from the apparent inconsistency and injustice of the laws alluded to. His feelings are much like those of an honorable man who is compelled to exonerate himself from a disgraceful charge, although he may know the accusation to be false. At the bottom, Sitgreaves had much good sense, and thus called on, he took up the cudgels of argument in downright earnest.

"We deem it a liberty to have the deciding voice in the councils by which we are governed. We think it a hardship to be ruled by the king of a people who live at a distance of three thousand miles, and who cannot, and who do not, feel a single political interest in common with ourselves. I say nothing of oppression; the child was of age, and was entitled to the privileges of majority. In such cases, there is but one tribunal to which to appeal for a nation's rights — it is power, and we now make the appeal."

"Such doctrines may suit your present purposes," said Wellmere, with a sneer; "but I apprehend it is opposed to all the opinions and practices of civilized nations."

"It is in conformity with the practices of all nations," said the surgeon, returning the nod and smile of Lawton, who enjoyed the good sense of his comrade as much as he disliked what he called "his medical talk." "Who would be ruled when he can rule? the only rational ground to take is, that every community has a right to govern itself, so that in no manner it violates the laws of God."

"And is holding your fellow-creatures in bondage in conformity to those laws?" asked the colonel, impressively.

The surgeon took another glass, and hemming once, returned to the combat.

"Sir," said he, "slavery is of very ancient origin, and it seems to have been confined to no particular religion or form of government; every nation of civilized Europe does, or has held their fellow-creatures in this kind of *duresse*."

"You will except Great Britain, sir," cried the colonel, proudly.

"No, sir," continued the surgeon, confidently, feeling that he was now carrying the war out of his own country; "I cannot except Great Britain. It was her children, her ships, and her laws, that first introduced the practice into these States; and on her institutions the judgment must fall. There is not a foot of ground belonging to England, in which a negro would be useful, that has not its slave. England herself has none, but England is overflowing with physical force, a part of which she is obliged to maintain in the shape of paupers. The same is true of France, and most other European countries. So long as we were content to remain colonies, nothing was said of our system of domestic slavery; but now, when we are resolute to obtain as much freedom as the vicious system of metropolitan rule has left us, that which is England's gift has become our reproach. Will your master liberate the slaves of his subjects should he succeed in subduing the new States, or will he condemn the whites to the same servitude as that in which he has been so long content to see the blacks? It is true, we continue the practice; but we must come gradually to the remedy, or create an evil greater than that which we endure at present: doubtless, as we advance, the manumission of our slaves will accompany us, until happily these fair regions shall exist, without a single image of the Creator that is held in a state which disqualifies him to judge of that Creator's goodness."

It will be remembered that Doctor Sitgreaves spoke forty years ago, and Wellmere was unable to contradict his prophetic assertion.

Finding the subject getting to be knotty, the Englishman retired to the apartment in which the ladies had assembled; and, seated by the side of Sarah, he found a more pleasing employment in relating the events of fashionable life in the metropolis, and in recalling the thousand little anecdotes of their former associates. Miss Peyton was a pleased listener, as she dispensed the bounties of the tea-table, and Sarah frequently bowed her blushing countenance

to her needle-work, as her face glowed at the flattering remarks of her companion.

The dialogue we have related established a perfect truce between the surgeon and his comrade; and the former having paid a visit to Singleton, they took their leave of the ladies, and mounted; the former to visit the wounded at the encampment, and the latter to rejoin his troop. But their movements were arrested at the gate by an occurrence that we shall relate in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

I see no more those white locks thinly spread
Round the bald polish of that honored head:
No more that meek, that suppliant look in prayer,
Nor that pure faith that gave it force, are there:
But he is blest, and I lament no more,
A wise good man, contented to be poor.

CRABBE.

WE have already said that the customs of America leave the dead but a short time in the sight of the mourners; and the necessity of providing for his own safety had compelled the pedler to abridge even this brief space. In the confusion and agitation produced by the events we have recorded, the death of the elder Birch had occurred unnoticed; but a sufficient number of the immediate neighbors were hastily collected, and the ordinary rites of sepulture were now about to be paid to the deceased. It was the approach of this humble procession that arrested the movements of the trooper and his comrade. Four men supported the body on a rude bier; and four others walked in advance, ready to relieve their friends from their burden. The pedler walked next the coffin, and by his side moved Katy Haynes, with a most determined aspect of woe, and next to the mourners came Mr. Wharton and the English captain. Two or three old men and women, with a few straggling boys, brought up the rear. Captain Lawton sat in his saddle, in rigid silence, until the bearers came opposite to his position, and then, for the first time, Harvey raised his eyes from the ground, and saw the enemy that he dreaded so near him. The first impulse of the pedler was certainly flight; but recovering his recollection, he fixed his eye on the coffin of his parent, and passed the dragoon with a firm step but swelling heart. The trooper slowly lifted his cap,

and continued uncovered until Mr. Wharton and his son had moved by, when, accompanied by the surgeon, he rode leisurely in the rear, maintaining an inflexible silence.

Cæsar emerged from the cellar kitchen of the cottage, and with a face of settled solemnity, added himself to the number of the followers of the funeral, though with an humble mien, and at a most respectful distance from the horsemen. The old negro had placed around his arm, a little above the elbow, a napkin of unsullied whiteness, it being the only time since his departure from the city that he had enjoyed an opportunity of exhibiting himself in the garniture of servile mourning. He was a great lover of propriety, and had been a little stimulated to this display by a desire to show his sable friend from Georgia all the decencies of a New York funeral; and the ebullition of his zeal went off very well, producing no other result than a mild lecture from Miss Peyton at his return, on the fitness of things. The attendance of the black was thought well enough in itself; but the napkin was deemed a superfluous exhibition of ceremony, at the funeral of a man who had performed all the menial offices in his own person.

The graveyard was an inclosure on the grounds of Mr. Wharton, which had been fenced with stone, and set apart for the purpose, by that gentleman, some years before. It was not, however, intended as a burial-place for any of his own family. Until the fire, which raged as the British troops took possession of New York, had laid Trinity in ashes, a goodly gilded tablet on its walls proclaimed the virtues of his deceased parents, and beneath a flag of marble, in one of the aisles of the church, their bones were left to moulder in aristocratical repose. Captain Lawton made a movement as if he was disposed to follow the procession, when it left the highway, to enter the field which contained the graves of the humble dead, but he was recalled to recollection by a hint from his companion that he was taking the wrong road.

"Of all the various methods which have been adopted by man for the disposal of his earthly remains, which do you prefer, Captain Lawton?" said the surgeon, as they sep-

arated from the little procession: "in some countries the body is exposed to be devoured by wild beasts; in others it is suspended in the air to exhale its substance in the manner of decomposition; in other regions it is consumed on the funeral pile, and, again, it is inhumed in the bowels of the earth; every people have their own particular fashion, and to which do you give the preference?"

"All are agreeable," said the trooper, following the group they had left with his eyes; "though the speediest interments give the cleanest fields. Of which are you an admirer?"

"The last, as practiced by ourselves, for the other three are destructive of all the opportunities for dissection; whereas, in the last, the coffin can lie in peaceful decency, while the remains are made to subserve the useful purposes of science. Ah! Captain Lawton, I enjoy comparatively but few opportunities of such a nature, to what I expected on entering the army."

"To what may these pleasures numerically amount in a year?" said the captain, withdrawing his gaze from the graveyard.

"Within a dozen, upon my honor; my best picking is when the corps is detached; for when we are with the main army, there are so many boys to be satisfied, that I seldom get a good subject. Those youngsters are as wasteful as prodigals, and as greedy as vultures."

"A dozen!" echoed the trooper, in surprise; "why I furnish you that number with my own hands."

"Ah! Jack," returned the doctor, approaching the subject with great tenderness of manner, "it is seldom I can do anything with your patients; you disfigure them wofully; believe me, John, when I tell you as a friend that your sytem is all wrong; you unnecessarily destroy life, and then you injure the body so that it is unfit for the only use that can be made of a dead man."

The trooper maintained a silence, which he thought would be the most probable means of preserving peace between them; and the surgeon, turning his head from taking a last look at the burial, as they rode round the

foot of the hill that shut the valley from their sight, continued with a suppressed sigh —

"One might get a natural death from that graveyard to-night, if there was but time and opportunity! the patient must be the father of the lady we saw this morning."

"The petticoat doctor! — she with the aurora borealis complexion," said the trooper, with a smile, that began to cause uneasiness to his companion; "but the lady was not the gentleman's daughter, only his medico-petticoat attendant; and the Harvey, whose name was made to rhyme with every word in her song, is the renowned pedler spy."

"What! he who unhorsed you?"

"No man ever unhorsed me, Dr. Sitgreaves," said the dragoon, gravely; "I fell by a mischance of Roanoke; rider and beast kissed the earth together."

"A warm embrace, from the love spots it left on your cuticle; 'tis a thousand pities that you cannot find where the tattling rascal lies hid."

"He followed his father's body."

"And you let him pass!" cried the surgeon, checking his horse; "let us return immediately, and take him; to-morrow you shall have him hanged, Jack, — and, damn him, I'll dissect him!"

"Softly, softly, my dear Archibald; would you arrest a man while paying the last offices to a dead father? Leave him to me, and I pledge myself he shall have justice."

The doctor muttered his dissatisfaction at any postponement of vengeance, but he was compelled to acquiesce, from a regard to his reputation for propriety; and they continued their ride to the quarters of the corps, engaged in various discussions concerning the welfare of the human body.

Birch supported the grave and collected manner that was thought becoming in a male mourner, on such occasions, and to Katy was left the part of exhibiting the tenderness of the softer sex. There are some people, whose feelings are of such nature that they cannot weep unless it be in proper company, and the spinster was a good deal addicted to this congregational virtue. After casting her

eyes round the small assemblage, the housekeeper found the countenances of the few females, who were present, fixed on her in solemn expectation, and the effect was instantaneous; the maiden really wept, and she gained no inconsiderable sympathy, and some reputation for a tender heart, from the spectators. The muscles of the pedler's face were seen to move, and as the first clod of earth fell on the tenement of his father, sending up that dull, hollow sound, that speaks so eloquently the mortality of man, his whole frame was for an instant convulsed. He bent his body down, as if in pain, his fingers worked while the hands hung lifeless by his side, and there was an expression in his countenance that seemed to announce a writhing of the soul; but it was not unresisted, and it was transient. He stood erect, drew a long breath, and looked around him with an elevated face, that even seemed to smile with a consciousness of having obtained the mastery. The grave was soon filled; a rough stone, placed at either extremity, marked its position, and the turf, whose faded vegetation was adapted to the fortunes of the deceased, covered the little hillock with the last office of seemliness. This office ended, the neighbors, who had officiously pressed forward to offer their services in performing this solemn duty, paused, and lifting their hats, stood looking towards the mourner, who now felt himself to be really alone in the world. Uncovering his head also, the pedler hesitated a moment, to gather energy, and spoke.

"My friends and neighbors," he said, "I thank you for assisting me to bury my dead out of my sight."

A solemn pause succeeded the customary address, and the group dispersed in silence, some few walking with the mourners back to their own habitation, but respectfully leaving them at its entrance. The pedler and Katy were followed into the building by one man, however, who was well known to the surrounding country by the significant term of "a speculator." Katy saw him enter, with a heart that palpitated with dreadful forebodings, but Harvey civilly handed him a chair, and evidently was prepared for the visit.

The pedler went to the door, and, taking a cautious glance about the valley, quickly returned, and commenced the following dialogue: —

"The sun has just left the top of the eastern hill; my time presses me: here is the deed for the house and lot; everything is done according to law."

The other took the paper, and conned its contents with a deliberation that proceeded partly from his caution, and partly from the unlucky circumstance of his education having been much neglected when a youth. The time occupied in this tedious examination was employed by Harvey in gathering together certain articles, which he intended to include in the stores that were to leave the habitation with himself. Katy had already inquired of the pedler, whether the deceased had left a will; and she saw the Bible placed in the bottom of a new pack, which she had made for his accommodation, with a most stoical indifference; but as the six silver spoons were laid carefully by its side, a sudden twinge of her conscience objected to such a palpable waste of property, and she broke silence.

"When you marry, Harvey, you may miss those spoons."

"I never shall marry."

"Well, if you don't there's no occasion to make rash promises, even to yourself. One never knows what one may do, in such a case. I should like to know, of what use so many spoons can be to a single man: for my part, I think it is a duty for every man who is well provided, to have a wife and family to maintain."

At the time when Katy expressed this sentiment, the fortune of women in her class of life consisted of a cow, a bed, the labors of their own hands in the shape of divers pillow cases, blankets, and sheets, with, where fortune was unusually kind, a half-dozen silver spoons. The spinster herself had obtained all the other necessaries by her own industry and prudence, and it can easily be imagined that she saw the articles she had long counted her own, vanish in the enormous pack, with a dissatisfaction that was in no degree diminished by the declaration that had preceded the

act. Harvey, however, disregarded her opinions and feelings, and continued his employment of filling the pack, which soon grew to something like the ordinary size of the pedler's burden.

"I'm rather timersome about this conveyance," said the purchaser, having at length waded through the covenants of the deed.

"Why so?"

"I'm afraid it won't stand good in law. I know that two of the neighbors leave home to-morrow morning, to have the place entered for confistication; and if I should give forty pounds, and lose it all, 'twould be a dead pull-back to me."

"They can only take my right," said the pedler: "pay me two hundred dollars, and the house is yours: you are a well-known Whig, and you at least they won't trouble." As Harvey spoke, there was a strange bitterness of manner, mingled with the shrewd care he expressed concerning the sale of his property.

"Say one hundred, and it is a bargain," returned the man, with a grin that he meant for a good-natured smile.

"A bargain!" echoed the pedler, in surprise; "I thought the bargain already made."

"Nothing is a bargain," said the purchaser, with a chuckle, "until papers are delivered, and the money paid in hand."

"You have the paper."

"Aye, and will keep it, if you will excuse the money; come, say one hundred and fifty, and I won't be hard; here — here is just the money."

The pedler looked from the window, and saw with dismay that the evening was fast advancing, and knew well that he endangered his life by remaining in the dwelling after dark; yet he could not tolerate the idea of being defrauded in this manner, in a bargain that had already been fairly made; he hesitated.

"Well," said the purchaser, rising, "mayhap you can find another man to trade with between this and morning; but, if you don't, your title won't be worth much afterwards."

"Take it, Harvey," said Katy, who felt it impossible to resist a tender like the one before her; for the purchase-money was in English guineas. Her voice roused the pedler, and a new idea seemed to strike him.

"I agree to the price," he said; and, turning to the spinster, he placed part of the money in her hand, as he continued, "had I other means to pay you, I would have lost all, rather than have suffered myself to be defrauded of part."

"You may lose all yet," muttered the stranger, with a sneer, as he rose and left the building.

"Yes," said Katy, following him with her eyes; "he knows your failing, Harvey; he thinks with me, now the old gentleman is gone, you will want a careful body to take care of your concerns."

The pedler was busied in making arrangements for his departure, and he took no notice of this insinuation, while the spinster returned again to the attack. She had lived so many years in expectation of a termination to her hopes, so different from that which now seemed likely to occur, that the idea of separation began to give her more uneasiness than she had thought herself capable of feeling, about a man so destitute and friendless.

"Have you another house to go to?" inquired Katy.

"Providence will provide me with a home."

"Yes," said the housekeeper; "but maybe 'twill not be to your liking."

"The poor must not be difficult."

"I'm sure I'm anything but a difficult body," cried the spinster, very hastily; "but I love to see things becoming, and in their places; yet I wouldn't be hard to persuade to leave this place myself. I can't say I altogether like the ways of the people hereabouts."

"The valley is lovely," said the pedler, with fervor, "and the people like all the race of man. But to me it matters nothing; all places are now alike, and all faces equally strange;" as he spoke he dropped the article he was packing from his hand, and seated himself on a chest, with a look of vacant misery.

"Not so, not so," said Katy, shoving her chair nearer to the place where the pedler sat; "not so, Harvey, you must know me at least; my face cannot be strange to you, certainly."

Birch turned his eyes slowly on her countenance, which exhibited more of feeling, and less of self, than he had ever seen there before; he took her hand kindly, and his own features lost some of their painful expression, as he said, —

"Yes, good woman, you, at least, are not a stranger to me; you may do me partial justice; when others revile me, possibly your feelings may lead you to say something in my defense."

"That I will; that I would!" said Katy, eagerly; "I will defend you, Harvey, to the last drop; let me hear them that dare revile you! you say true, Harvey, I am partial and just to you; what if you do like the king? I have often heard it said he was at the bottom a good man; but there's no religion in the old country, for everybody allows the ministers are desperate bad!"

The pedler paced the floor in evident distress of mind; his eye had a look of wildness that Katy had never witnessed before, and his step was measured, with a dignity that appalled the housekeeper.

"While my father lived," murmured Harvey, unable to smother his feelings, "there was one who read my heart, and oh! what a consolation to return from my secret marches of danger, and the insults and wrongs that I suffered, to receive his blessing and his praise; but he is gone," he continued, stopping and gazing wildly towards the corner that used to hold the figure of his parent, "and who is there to do me justice?"

"Why, Harvey! Harvey!"

"Yes, there is one who will, who must know me before I die! Oh! it is dreadful to die, and leave such a name behind me."

"Don't talk of dying, Harvey," said the spinster, glancing her eye around the room, and pushing the wood in the fire to obtain a light from the blaze.

The ebullition of feeling in the pedler was over. He

had been excited by the events of the past day, and a vivid perception of his sufferings. It was not long, however, that passion maintained an ascendency over the reason of this singular man; and perceiving that the night had already thrown an obscurity around objects without doors, he hastily threw his pack over his shoulders, and taking Katy kindly by the hand, in leave-taking, —

"It is painful to part with even you, good woman," he said; "but the hour has come, and I must go. What is left in the house is yours; to me it could be of no use, and it may serve to make you more comfortable. Farewell — we shall meet hereafter."

"In the regions of darkness!" cried a voice that caused the pedler to sink on the chest from which he had risen, in despair.

"What! another pack, Mr. Birch, and so well stuffed so soon!"

"Have you not done evil enough?" cried the pedler, regaining his firmness, and springing on his feet with energy; "is it not enough to harass the last moments of a dying man — to impoverish me; what more would you have?"

"Your blood!" said the Skinner, with cool malignity.

"And for money," cried Harvey, bitterly; "like the ancient Judas, you would grow rich with the price of blood!"

"Aye, and a fair price it is, my gentleman; fifty guineas; nearly the weight of that scarecrow carcass of yours in gold."

"Here," said Katy, promptly, "here are fifteen guineas, and these drawers and this bed are all mine; if you will give Harvey but one hour's start from the door, they shall be yours."

"One hour?" said the Skinner, showing his teeth, and looking with a longing eye at the money.

"But a single hour; here, take the money."

"Hold!" cried Harvey; "put no faith in the miscreant."

"She may do what she pleases with her faith," said the

Skinner, with malignant pleasure; "but I have the money in good keeping; as for you, Mr. Birch, we will bear your insolence, for the fifty guineas that are to pay for your gallows."

"Go on," said the pedler, proudly; "take me to Major Dunwoodie; he, at least, may be kind, although he may be just."

"I can do better than by marching so far in such disgraceful company; this Mr. Dunwoodie has let one or two Tories go at large; but the troop of Captain Lawton is quartered some half mile nearer, and his receipt will get me the reward as soon as his major's; how relish you the idea of supping with Captain Lawton, this evening, Mr. Birch?"

"Give me my money, or set Harvey free," cried the spinster in alarm.

"Your bribe was not enough, good woman, unless there is money in this bed:" thrusting his bayonet through the ticking, and ripping it for some distance, he took a malicious satisfaction in scattering its contents about the room.

"If," cried the housekeeper, losing sight of her personal danger in care for her newly-acquired property, "there is law in the land, I will be righted!"

"The law of the neutral ground is the law of the strongest; but your tongue is not as long as my bayonet; you had, therefore, best not set them at loggerheads, or you might be the loser."

A figure stood in the shadow of the door, as if afraid to be seen in the group of Skinners; but a blaze of light, raised by some articles thrown in the fire by his persecutors, showed the pedler the face of the purchaser of his little domain. Occasionally there was some whispering between this man and the Skinner nearest him, that induced Harvey to suspect he had been the dupe of a contrivance in which that wretch had participated. It was, however, too late to repine; and he followed the party from the house with a firm and collected tread, as if marching to a triumph, and not to a gallows. In passing through the yard, the leader of the band fell over a billet of wood, and received a

momentary hurt from the fall: exasperated at the incident, the fellow sprang on his feet, filling the air with execrations.

"The curse of Heaven light on the log!" he exclaimed; "the night is too dark for us to move in: throw that brand of fire in yon pile of tow, to light up the scene."

"Hold!" roared the speculator; "you'll fire the house."

"And see the farther," said the other, hurling the brand in the midst of the combustibles. In an instant the building was in flames. "Come on; let us move towards the heights while we have light to pick our road."

"Villain!" cried the exasperated purchaser, "is this your friendship — this my reward for kidnapping the pedler?"

"'Twould be wise to move more from the light, if you mean to entertain us with abuse, or we may see too well to miss our mark," cried the leader of the gang. The next instant he was as good as his threat, but happily missed the terrified speculator and equally appalled spinster, who saw herself again reduced from comparative wealth to poverty, by the blow. Prudence dictated to the pair a speedy retreat; and the next morning, the only remains of the dwelling of the pedler was the huge chimney we have already mentioned.

CHAPTER XV.

Trifles, light as air,
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ.

OTHELLO.

THE weather, which had been mild and clear since the storm, now changed with the suddenness of the American climate. Towards evening the cold blasts poured down from the mountains, and flurries of snow plainly indicated that the month of November had arrived; a season whose temperature varies from the heats of summer to the cold of winter. Frances had stood at the window of her own apartment, watching the slow progress of the funeral procession, with a melancholy that was too deep to be excited by the spectacle. There was something in the sad office that was in unison with her feelings. As she gazed around, she saw the trees bending to the force of the wind, that swept through the valley with an impetuosity that shook even the buildings; and the forest, that had so lately glittered in the sun with its variegated hues, was fast losing its loveliness, as the leaves were torn from the branches, and were driving irregularly before the eddies of the blast. A few of the southern dragoons, who were patrolling the passes which led to the encampment of the corps, could be distinguished at a distance on the heights, bending to their pommels as they faced the keen air which had so lately traversed the great fresh-water lakes, and drawing their watch-coats about them in tighter folds.

Frances witnessed the disappearance of the wooden tenement of the deceased, as it was slowly lowered from the light of day; and the sight added to the chilling dreariness of the view. Captain Singleton was sleeping under the

care of his own man, while his sister had been persuaded to take possession of her room, for the purpose of obtaining the repose of which her last night's journeying had robbed her. The apartment of Miss Singleton communicated with the room occupied by the sisters, through a private door, as well as through the ordinary passage of the house; this door was partly open, and Frances moved towards it, with the benevolent intention of ascertaining the situation of her guest, when the surprised girl saw her whom she had thought to be sleeping, not only awake, but employed in a manner that banished all probability of present repose. The black tresses, that during the dinner had been drawn in close folds over the crown of the head, were now loosened, and fell in profusion over her shoulders and bosom, imparting a slight degree of wildness to her countenance; the chilling white of her complexion was strongly contrasted with eyes of the deepest black, that were fixed in rooted attention on a picture she held in her hand. Frances hardly breathed, as she was enabled, by a movement of Isabella, to see that it was the figure of a man in the well-known dress of the southern horse; but she gasped for breath, and instinctively laid her hand on her heart to quell its throbbings, as she thought she recognized the lineaments that were so deeply seated in her own imagination. Frances felt she was improperly prying into the sacred privacy of another; but her emotions were too powerful to permit her to speak, and she drew back to a chair, where she still retained a view of the stranger, from whose countenance she felt it to be impossible to withdraw her eyes. Isabella was too much engrossed by her own feelings to discover the trembling figure of the witness to her actions, and she pressed the inanimate image to her lips, with an enthusiasm that denoted the most intense passion. The expression of the countenance of the fair stranger was so changeable, and the transitions were so rapid, that Frances had scarcely time to distinguish the character of the emotion, before it was succeeded by another, equally powerful and equally attractive. Admiration and sorrow were however the preponderating passions; the latter was indicated by large

drops that fell from her eyes on the picture, and which followed each other over her cheek at such intervals, as seemed to pronounce the grief too heavy to admit of the ordinary demonstrations of sorrow. Every movement of Isabella was marked by an enthusiasm that was peculiar to her nature, and every passion in its turn triumphed in her breast. The fury of the wind, as it whistled round the angles of the building, was in consonance with those feelings, and she rose and moved to a window of her apartment. Her figure was now hid from the view of Frances, who was about to rise and approach her guest, when tones of a thrilling melody chained her in breathless silence to the spot. The notes were wild, and the voice not powerful, but the execution exceeded anything that Frances had ever heard; and she stood, endeavoring to stifle the sounds of her own gentle breathing, until the following song was concluded: —

Cold blow the blasts o'er the tops of the mountain,
And bare is the oak on the hill;
Slowly the vapors exhale from the fountain,
And bright gleams the ice-bordered rill;
All nature is seeking its annual rest,
But the slumbers of peace have deserted my breast.

Long has the storm poured its weight on my nation,
And long have her brave stood the shock;
Long has her chieftain ennobled his station,
A bulwark on liberty's rock;
Unlicensed ambition relaxes its toil,
Yet blighted affection represses my smile.

Abroad the wild fury of winter is lowering,
And leafless and drear is the tree;
But the vertical sun of the south appears pouring
Its fierce killing heats upon me:
Without, all the season's chill symptoms begin —
But the fire of passion is raging within.

Frances abandoned her whole soul to the suppressed melody of the music, though the language of the song expressed a meaning, which, united with certain events of that and the preceding day, left a sensation of uneasiness in the bosom of the warm-hearted girl, to which she had hitherto been a stranger. Isabella moved from the window as her

last tones melted on the ear of her admiring listener, and, for the first time, her eye rested on the pallid face of the intruder. A glow of fire lighted the countenance of both at the same instant, and the blue eye of Frances met the brilliant black one of her guest for a single moment, and both fell in abashed confusion on the carpet; they advanced, however, until they met, and had taken each other's hand, before either ventured again to look her companion in the face.

"This sudden change in the weather, and perhaps the situation of my brother, have united to make me melancholy, Miss Wharton," said Isabella, in a low tone, and in a voice that trembled as she spoke.

"'Tis thought you have little to apprehend for your brother," said Frances, in the same embarrassed manner; "had you seen him when he was brought in by Major Dunwoodie"—

Frances paused, with a feeling of conscious shame, for which she could not account; and, in raising her eyes, she saw Isabella studying her countenance with an earnestness that again drove the blood tumultuously to her temples.

"You were speaking of Major Dunwoodie," said Isabella, faintly.

"He was with Captain Singleton."

"Do you know Dunwoodie? have you seen him often?" Once more Frances ventured to look her guest in the face, and again she met the piercing eyes bent on her, as if to search her inmost heart. "Speak, Miss Wharton; is Major Dunwoodie known to you?"

"He is my relative," said Frances, appalled at the manner of the other.

"A relative!" echoed Miss Singleton; "in what degree?—speak, Miss Wharton, I conjure you to speak."

"Our parents were cousins," faintly replied Frances.

"And he is to be your husband!" said the stranger impetuously.

Frances felt shocked, and all her pride awakened, by this direct attack upon her feelings, and she raised her

eyes from the floor to her interrogator a little proudly, when the pale cheek and quivering lip of Isabella removed her resentment in a moment.

"It is true! my conjecture is true; speak to me, Miss Wharton; I conjure you, in mercy to my feelings, to tell me — do you love Dunwoodie?" There was a plaintive earnestness in the voice of Miss Singleton, that disarmed Frances of all resentment, and the only answer she could make was to hide her burning face between her hands, as she sunk back in a chair to conceal her confusion.

Isabella paced the floor in silence for several minutes, until she had succeeded in conquering the violence of her feelings, when she approached the place where Frances yet sat, endeavoring to exclude the eyes of her companion from reading the shame expressed in her countenance, and, taking the hand of the other, she spoke with an evident effort at composure.

"Pardon me, Miss Wharton, if my ungovernable feelings have led me into impropriety; the powerful motive — the cruel reason" — she hesitated; Frances now raised her face, and their eyes once more met; they fell in each other's arms, and laid their burning cheeks together. The embrace was long — was ardent and sincere — but neither spoke; and on separating, Frances retired to her own room without further explanation.

While this extraordinary scene was acting in the room of Miss Singleton, matters of great importance were agitated in the drawing-room. The disposition of the fragments of such a dinner as the one we have recorded, was a task that required no little exertion and calculation. Notwithstanding several of the small game had nestled in the pocket of Captain Lawton's man, and even the assistant of Dr. Sitgreaves had calculated the uncertainty of his remaining long in such good quarters, still there was more left unconsumed than the prudent Miss Peyton knew how to dispose of to advantage. Cæsar and his mistress had, therefore, a long and confidential communication on this important business; and the consequence was, that Colonel Wellmere was left to the hospitality of Sarah Wharton

All the ordinary topics of conversation were exhausted, when the colonel, with a little of the uneasiness that is in some degree inseparable from conscious error, touched lightly on the transactions of the preceding day.

"We little thought, Miss Wharton, when I first saw this Mr. Dunwoodie in your house in Queen Street, that he was to be the renowned warrior he has proved himself," said Wellmere, endeavoring to smile away his chagrin.

"Renowned, when we consider the enemy he overcame," said Sarah, with consideration for her companion's feelings. "'Twas most unfortunate, indeed, in every respect, that you met with the accident, or doubtless the royal arms would have triumphed in their usual manner."

"And yet the pleasure of such society as this accident has introduced me to, would more than repay the pain of a mortified spirit and wounded body," added the colonel, in a manner of peculiar softness.

"I hope the latter is but trifling," said Sarah, stooping to hide her blushes under the pretext of biting a thread from the work on her knee.

"Trifling, indeed, compared to the former," returned the colonel, in the same manner. "Ah! Miss Wharton, it is at such moments that we feel the full value of friendship and sympathy."

Those who have never tried it cannot easily imagine what a rapid progress a warm-hearted female can make in love, in the short space of half an hour, particularly where there is a predisposition to the distemper. Sarah found the conversation, when it began to touch on friendship and sympathy, too interesting to venture her voice with a reply. She, however, turned her eyes on the colonel, and saw him gazing at her fine face with an admiration that was quite as manifest, and much more soothing, than any words could make it.

Their tête-á-tête was uninterrupted for an hour; and although nothing that would be called decided, by an experienced matron, was said by the gentleman, he uttered a thousand things that delighted his companion, who retired to her rest with a lighter heart than she had felt since the arrest of her brother by the Americans.

CHAPTER XVI.

And let me the canakin clink, clink,
And let me the canakin clink.
A soldier's a man;
A life's but a span;
Why then, let a soldier drink.

OTHELLO.

THE position held by the corps of dragoons, we have already said, was a favorite place of halting with their commander. A cluster of some half-dozen small and dilapidated buildings formed what, from the circumstance of two roads intersecting each other at right angles, was called the village of the Four Corners. As usual, one of the most imposing of these edifices had been termed, in the language of the day, "a house of entertainment for man and beast." On a rough board suspended from the gallows-looking post that had supported the ancient sign, was, however, written in red chalk, "Elizabeth Flanagan, her hotel," an ebullition of the wit of some of the idle wags of the corps. The matron, whose name had thus been exalted to an office of such unexpected dignity, ordinarily discharged the duties of a female sutler, washerwoman, and, to use the language of Katy Haynes, petticoat doctor to the troops. She was the widow of a soldier who had been killed in the service, and who, like herself, was a native of a distant island, and had early tried his fortune in the colonies of North America. She constantly migrated with the troops; and it was seldom that they became stationary for two days at a time but the little cart of the bustling woman was seen driving into the encampment, loaded with such articles as she conceived would make her presence most welcome. With a celerity that seemed almost supernatural, Betty took up her ground and commenced her occupation. Sometimes the

cart itself was her shop; at others the soldiers made her a rude shelter of such materials as offered; but on the present occasion she had seized on a vacant building, and, by dint of stuffing the dirty breeches and half-dried linen of the troopers into the broken windows, to exclude the cold, which had now become severe, she formed what she herself had pronounced to be "most illigant lodgings." The men were quartered in the adjacent barns, and the officers collected in the "Hotel Flanagan," as they facetiously called headquarters. Betty was well known to every trooper in the corps, could call each by his Christian or nickname, as best suited her fancy; and, although absolutely intolerable to all whom habit had not made familiar with her virtues, was a general favorite with these partisan warriors. Her faults were, a trifling love of liquor, excessive filthiness, and a total disregard of all the decencies of language; her virtues, an unbounded love for her adopted country, perfect honesty when dealing on certain known principles with the soldiery, and great good-nature. Added to these, Betty had the merit of being the inventor of that beverage which is so well known, at the present hour, to all the patriots who make a winter's march between the commercial and political capitals of this great State, and which is distinguished by the name of "cock-tail." Elizabeth Flanagan was peculiarly well qualified, by education and circumstances, to perfect this improvement in liquors, having been literally brought up on its principal ingredient, and having acquired from her Virginian customers the use of mint, from its flavor in a julep to its height of renown in the article in question. Such, then, was the mistress of the mansion, who, reckless of the cold northern blasts, showed her blooming face from the door of the building to welcome the arrival of her favorite, Captain Lawton, and his companion, her master in matters of surgery.

"Ah! by my hopes of promotion, my gentle Elizabeth, but you are welcome!" cried the trooper, as he threw himself from his saddle; "this villainous fresh-water gas from the Canadas has been whistling among my bones till they ache with the cold, but the sight of your fiery countenance is as cheering as a Christmas fire."

"Now sure, Captain Jack, ye's always full of your complimentaries," replied the sutler, taking the bridle of her customer; "but hurry in for the life of you, darling; the fences hereabouts are not so strong as in the Highlands, and there's that within will warm both sowl and body."

"So you have been laying the rails under contribution, I see: well, that may do for the body," said the captain coolly; "but I have had a pull at a bottle of cut-glass with a silver stand, and I doubt my relish for your whiskey for a month to come."

"If it's silver or goold that ye're thinking of, it's but little I have, though I've a trifling bit of the continental," said Betty, with a look of humor; "but there's that within that's fit to be put in vissels of di'monds."

"What can she mean, Archibald?" asked Lawton: "the animal looks as if it meant more than it says!"

"'Tis probably a wandering of the reasoning powers, created by the frequency of intoxicating draughts," observed the surgeon, as he deliberately threw his left leg over the pommel of the saddle, and slid down on the right side of his horse.

"Faith, my dear jewel of a doctor, but it was this side I was expicting you; the whole corps come down on this side but yeerself," said Betty, winking at the trooper: "but I've been feeding the wounded, in yeer absence, with the fat of the land."

"Barbarous stupidity!" cried the panic-stricken physician, "to feed men laboring under the excitement of fever with powerful nutriment: woman, woman, you are enough to defeat the skill of Hippocrates!"

"Pooh!" said Betty, with infinite composure, "what a botheration ye make about a little whiskey; there was but a gallon betwixt a good two dozen of them, and I gave it to the boys to make them sleep asy; sure, jist as slumbering drops."

Lawton and his companion now entered the building, and the first objects which met their eyes explained the hidden meaning of Betty's comfortable declaration. A long table, made of boards torn from the side of an out-

building, was stretched through the middle of the largest apartment, or the bar-room, and on it was a very scanty display of crockery ware. The steams of cookery arose from an adjoining kitchen, but the principal attraction was in a demijohn of fair proportions, which had been ostentatiously placed on high by Betty as the object most worthy of notice. Lawton soon learnt that it was teeming with the real amber-colored juice of the grape, and had been sent from the Locusts, as an offering to Major Dunwoodie, from his friend Captain Wharton, of the royal army.

"And a royal gift it is," said the grinning subaltern, who made the explanation. "The major gives us an entertainment in honor of our victory, and you see the principal expense is borne, as it should be, by the enemy. Zounds! I am thinking that after we have primed with such stuff, we could charge through Sir Henry's headquarters, and carry off the knight himself."

The captain of dragoons was in no manner displeased at the prospect of terminating so pleasantly a day that had been so agreeably commenced. He was soon surrounded by his comrades, who made many eager inquiries concerning his adventures, while the surgeon proceeded, with certain quakings of the heart, to examine into the state of his wounded. Enormous fires were snapping in the chimneys of the house, superseding the necessity of candles, by the bright light which was thrown from the blazing piles. The group within were all young men, and tried soldiers; in number they were rather more than a dozen, and their manners and conversation were a strange mixture of the bluntness of the partisan with the manners of gentlemen. Their dresses were neat, though plain; and a never-failing topic amongst them was the performance and quality of their horses. Some were endeavoring to sleep on the benches which lined the walls, some were walking the apartments, and others were seated in earnest discussion on subjects connected with the business of their lives. Occasionally, as the door of the kitchen opened, the hissing sounds of the frying-pans and the inviting savor of the food created a stagnation in all other employments; even the

sleepers, at such moments, would open their eyes, and raise their heads, to reconnoitre the state of the preparations. All this time Dunwoodie sat by himself, gazing at the fire, and lost in reflections which none of his officers presumed to disturb. He had made earnest inquiries of Sitgreaves after the condition of Singleton, during which a profound and respectful silence was maintained in the room; but as soon as he had ended, and resumed his seat, the usual ease and freedom prevailed.

The arrangement of the table was a matter of but little concern to Mrs. Flanagan; and Cæsar would have been sadly scandalized at witnessing the informality with which various dishes, each bearing a wonderful resemblance to the others, were placed before so many gentlemen of consideration. In taking their places at the board, the strictest attention was paid to precedency; for, notwithstanding the freedom of manners which prevailed in the corps, the points of military etiquette were at all times observed, with something approaching to religious veneration. Most of the guests had been fasting too long to be in any degree fastidious in their appetites; but the case was different with Captain Lawton; he felt an unaccountable loathing at the exhibition of Betty's food, and could not refrain from making a few passing comments on the condition of the knives, and the clouded aspect of the plates. The good-nature and the personal affection of Betty for the offender, restrained her, for some time, from answering his innuendoes, until Lawton, having ventured to admit a piece of the black meat into his mouth, inquired, with the affectation of a spoiled child, —

"What kind of animal might this have been when living, Mrs. Flanagan?"

"Sure, captain, and wasn't it the ould cow?" replied the sutler, with a warmth that proceeded partly from dissatisfaction at the complaints of her favorite, and partly from grief at the loss of the deceased.

"What!" roared the trooper, stopping short as he was about to swallow his morsel, "ancient Jenny!"

"The devil!" cried another, dropping his knife and

fork, "she who made the campaign of the Jerseys with us?"

"The very same," replied the mistress of the hotel, with a piteous aspect of woe; "a gentle baste, and one that could and did live on less than air, at need. Sure, gentlemen, 'tis awful to have to eat sitch an ould friend."

"And has she sunk to this?" said Lawton, pointing with his knife to the remnants on the table.

"Nay, captain," said Betty, with spirit, "I sould two of her quarters to some of your troop; but divil the word did I tell the boys what an ould frind it was they had bought, for fear it might damage their appetites."

"Fury!" cried the trooper, with affected anger, "I shall have my fellows as limber as supple-jacks on such fare; afraid of an Englishman as a Virginian negro is of his driver."

"Well," said Lieutenant Mason, dropping his knife and fork in a kind of despair, "my jaws have more sympathy than many men's hearts. They absolutely decline making any impression on the relics of their old acquaintance."

"Try a drop of the gift," said Betty, soothingly, pouring a large allowance of the wine into a bowl, and drinking it off as taster to the corps. "Faith, 'tis but a wishy-washy sort of stuff after all!"

The ice once broken, however, a clear glass of wine was handed to Dunwoodie, who, bowing to his companions, drank the liquor in the midst of a profound silence. For a few glasses there was much formality observed, and sundry patriotic toasts and sentiments were duly noticed by the company. The liquor, however, performed its wonted office; and before the second sentinel at the door had been relieved, all recollection of the dinner and their cares was lost in the present festivity. Dr. Sitgreaves did not return in season to partake of Jenny, but he was in time to receive his fair proportion of Captain Wharton's present.

"A song, a song from Captain Lawton!" cried two or three of the party in a breath, on observing the failure of some of the points of good-fellowship in the trooper: "silence, for the song of Captain Lawton."

"Gentlemen," returned Lawton, his dark eyes swimming with the bumpers he had finished, though his head was as impenetrable as a post; "I am not much of a nightingale, but, under the favor of your good wishes, I consent to comply with the demand."

"Now, Jack," said Sitgreaves, nodding on his seat, "remember the air I taught you, and — stop, I have a copy of the words in my pocket."

"Forbear, forbear, good doctor," said the trooper, filling his glass with great deliberation; "I never could wheel round those hard names. Gentlemen, I will give you an humble attempt of my own."

"Silence, for Captain Lawton's song!" roared five or six at once; when the trooper proceeded, in a fine full tone, to sing the following words to a well-known bacchanalian air, several of his comrades helping him through the chorus with a fervor that shook the crazy edifice they were in: —

Now push the mug, my jolly boys,
And live, while live we can;
To-morrow's sun may end your joys,
For brief's the hour of man.
And he who bravely meets the foe
His lease of life can never know.
Old mother Flanagan
Come and fill the can again;
For you can fill, and we can swill,
Good Betty Flanagan.

If love of life pervades your breast,
Or love of ease your frame,
Quit honor's path for peaceful rest,
And bear a coward's name;
For soon and late, we danger know,
And fearless on the saddle go.
Old mother, etc.

When foreign foes invade the land,
And wives and sweethearts call,
In freedom's cause we'll bravely stand,
Or will as bravely fall;
In this fair home the fates have given,
We'll live as lords, or live in heaven.
Old mother, etc.

At each appeal made to herself, by the united voices of

the choir, Betty invariably advanced and complied literally with the request contained in the chorus, to the infinite delight of the singers, and with no small participation in the satisfaction on her own account. The hostess was provided with a beverage more suited to the high seasoning to which she had accustomed her palate, than the tasteless present of Captain Wharton; by which means Betty had managed, with tolerable facility, to keep even pace with the exhilaration of her guests. The applause received by Captain Lawton was general, with the exception of the surgeon, who rose from the bench during the first chorus, and paced the floor, in a flow of classical indignation. The bravos and bravissimos drowned all other noises for a short time; but as they gradually ceased, the doctor turned to the musician, and exclaimed, with heat, —

"Captain Lawton, I marvel that a gentleman, and a gallant officer, can find no other subject for his muse, in these times of trial, than in such beastly invocations to that notorious follower of the camp, the filthy Elizabeth Flanagan. Methinks the goddess of Liberty could furnish a more noble inspiration, and the sufferings of your country a more befitting theme."

"Heyday!" shouted the hostess, advancing towards him in a threatening attitude; "and who is it that calls me filthy? Master Squirt! Master Pop-gun" —

"Peace!" said Dunwoodie, in a voice that was exerted but a little more than common, but which was succeeded by the stillness of death; "woman, leave the room. Dr. Sitgreaves, I call you to your seat, to wait the order of the revels."

"Proceed, proceed," said the surgeon, drawing himself up in an attitude of dignified composure; "I trust, Major Dunwoodie, I am not unacquainted with the rules of decorum, nor ignorant of the by-laws of good-fellowship." Betty made a hasty but somewhat devious retreat to her own dominions, being unaccustomed to dispute the orders of the commanding officer.

"Major Dunwoodie will honor us with a sentimental song," said Lawton, bowing to his leader, with the collected manner he so well knew how to assume.

The major hesitated a moment, and then sang, with fine execution, the following words: —

Some love the heats of southern suns,
Where life's warm current maddening runs,
In one quick circling stream;
But dearer far 's the mellow light
Which trembling shines, reflected bright
In Luna's milder beam.

Some love the tulip's gaudier dyes,
Where deepening blue with yellow vies,
And gorgeous beauty glows;
But happier he, whose bridal wreath,
By love entwined, is found to breathe
The sweetness of the rose.

The voice of Dunwoodie never lost its authority with his inferiors; and the applause which followed his song, though by no means so riotous as that which succeeded the effort of the captain, was much more flattering.

"If, sir," said the doctor, after joining in the plaudits of his companions, "you would but learn to unite classical allusions with your delicate imagination, you would become a pretty amateur poet."

"He who criticises ought to be able to perform," said Dunwoodie with a smile. "I call on Dr. Sitgreaves for a specimen of the style he admires."

"Dr. Sitgreaves' song! Dr. Sitgreaves' song!" echoed all at the table with delight; "a classical ode from Dr. Sitgreaves!"

The surgeon made a complacent bow, took the remnant of his glass, and gave a few preliminary hems, that served hugely to delight three or four young cornets at the foot of the table. He then commenced singing, in a cracked voice, and to anything but a tune, the following ditty: —

Hast thou ever felt love's dart, dearest,
Or breathed his trembling sigh —
Thought him, afar, was ever nearest,
Before that sparkling eye?
Then hast thou known what 'tis to feel
The pain that Galen could not heal.

"Hurrah!" shouted Lawton: "Archibald eclipses the muses themselves; his words flow like the sylvan stream

by moonlight, and his melody is a cross breed of the nightingale and the owl."

"Captain Lawton," cried the exasperated operator, "it is one thing to despise the lights of classical learning, and another to be despised for your own ignorance!"

A loud summons at the door of the building created a dead halt in the uproar, and the dragoons instinctively caught up their arms, to be prepared for the worst. The door was opened, and the Skinners entered, dragging in the pedler, bending beneath the load of his pack.

"Which is Captain Lawton?" said the leader of the gang, gazing around him in some little astonishment.

"He waits your pleasure," said the trooper dryly.

"Then here I deliver to your hands a condemned traitor: this is Harvey Birch, the pedler spy."

Lawton started as he looked his old acquaintance in the face, and, turning to the Skinner with a lowering look, he asked —

"And who are you, sir, that speak so freely of your neighbors? But," bowing to Dunwoodie, "your pardon, sir; here is the commanding officer; to him you will please address yourself."

"No," said the man, sullenly, "it is to you I deliver the pedler, and from you I claim my reward."

"Are you Harvey Birch?" said Dunwoodie, advancing with an air of authority that instantly drove the Skinner to a corner of the room.

"I am," said Birch, proudly.

"And a traitor to your country," continued the major, with sternness; "do you know that I should be justified in ordering your execution this night?"

"'Tis not the will of God to call a soul so hastily to his presence," said the pedler with solemnity.

"You speak truth," said Dunwoodie; "and a few brief hours shall be added to your life. But as your offense is most odious to a soldier, so it will be sure to meet with the soldier's vengeance: you die to-morrow."

"'Tis as God wills."

"I have spent many a good hour to entrap the villain,"

said the Skinner, advancing a little from his corner, "and I hope you will give me a certificate that will entitle us to the reward; 'twas promised to be paid in gold."

"Major Dunwoodie," said the officer of the day, entering the room, "the patrols report a house to be burnt near yesterday's battle-ground."

"'Twas the hut of the pedler," muttered the leader of the gang; "we have not left him a shingle for shelter; I should have burnt it months ago, but I wanted his shed for a trap to catch the sly fox in."

"You seem a most ingenious patriot," said Lawton. "Major Dunwoodie, I second the request of this worthy gentleman, and crave the office of bestowing the reward on him and his fellows."

"Take it; and you, miserable man, prepare for that fate which will surely befall you before the setting of to-morrow's sun."

"Life offers but little to tempt me with," said Harvey, slowly raising his eyes, and gazing wildly at the strange faces in the apartment.

"Come, worthy children of America!" said Lawton, "follow, and receive your reward."

The gang eagerly accepted the invitation, and followed the captain towards the quarters assigned to his troop. Dunwoodie paused a moment, from reluctance to triumph over a fallen foe, before he proceeded.

"You have already been tried, Harvey Birch; and the truth has proved you to be an enemy too dangerous to the liberties of America to be suffered to live."

"The truth!" echoed the pedler, starting, and raising himself in a manner that disregarded the weight of his pack.

"Aye! the truth; you were charged with loitering near the continental army, to gain intelligence of its movements, and, by communicating them to the enemy, to enable him to frustrate the intentions of Washington."

"Will Washington say so, think you?"

"Doubtless he would; even the justice of Washington condemns you."

"No, no, no," cried the pedler, in a voice and with a manner that startled Dunwoodie; "Washington can see beyond the hollow views of pretended patriots. Has he not risked his all on the cast of a die? if a gallows is ready for me, was there not one for him also? No, no, no, no — Washington would never say, 'Lead him to a gallows.'"

"Have you anything, wretched man, to urge to the commander-in-chief why you should not die?" said the major, recovering from the surprise created by the manner of the other.

Birch trembled, for violent emotions were contending in his bosom. His face assumed the ghastly paleness of death, and his hand drew a box of tin from the folds of his shirt; he opened it, showing by the act that it contained a small piece of paper: on this document his eye was for an instant fixed — he had already held it towards Dunwoodie, when suddenly withdrawing his hand, he exclaimed, —

"No — it dies with me; I know the conditions of my service, and will not purchase life with their forfeiture — it dies with me."

"Deliver that paper, and you may possibly find favor," cried Dunwoodie, expecting a discovery of importance to the cause.

"It dies with me," repeated Birch, a flush passing over his pallid features, and lighting them with extraordinary brilliancy.

"Seize the traitor!" cried the major, "and wrest the secret from his hands."

The order was immediately obeyed; but the movements of the pedler were too quick; in an instant he swallowed the paper. The officers paused in astonishment; but the surgeon cried eagerly, —

"Hold him, while I administer an emetic."

"Forbear!" said Dunwoodie, beckoning him back with his hand; "if his crime is great, so will his punishment be heavy."

"Lead on," cried the pedler, dropping his pack from his shoulders, and advancing towards the door with a manner of incomprehensible dignity.

"Whither?" asked Dunwoodie, in amazement.

"To the gallows."

"No," said the major, recoiling in horror at his own justice. "My duty requires that I order you to be executed, but surely not so hastily; take until nine to-morrow to prepare for the awful change."

Dunwoodie whispered his orders in the ear of a subaltern, and motioned to the pedler to withdraw. The interruption caused by this scene prevented further enjoyment around the table, and the officers dispersed to their several places of rest. In a short time the only noise to be heard was the heavy tread of the sentinel, as he paced the frozen ground in front of the Hotel Flanagan.

CHAPTER XVII.

There are, whose changing lineaments
Express each guileless passion of the breast;
Where Love, and Hope, and tender-hearted Pity
Are seen reflected, as from a mirror's face;
But cold experience can veil these hues
With looks, invented shrewdly to encompass
The cunning purposes of base deceit.

DUO.

THE officer to whose keeping Dunwoodie had committed the pedler transferred his charge to the custody of the regular sergeant of the guard. The gift of Captain Wharton had not been lost on the youthful lieutenant; and a certain dancing motion that had taken possession of objects before his eyes, gave him warning of the necessity of recruiting nature by sleep. After admonishing the non-commissioned guardian of Harvey to omit no watchfulness in securing the prisoner, the youth wrapped himself in his cloak, and, stretched on a bench before a fire, soon found the repose he needed. A rude shed extended the whole length of the rear of the building, and from off one of its ends had been partitioned a small apartment, that was intended as a repository for many of the lesser implements of husbandry. The lawless times had, however, occasioned its being stripped of everything of value; and the searching eyes of Betty Flanagan selected this spot, on her arrival, as the storehouse for her movables, and a sanctuary for her person. The spare arms and baggage of the corps had also been deposited here; and the united treasures were placed under the eye of the sentinel who paraded the shed as a guardian of the rear of the headquarters. A second soldier, who was stationed near the house to protect the horses of the officers, could command a view of the outside of the

apartment; and, as it was without window or outlet of any kind, excepting its door, the considerate sergeant thought this the most befitting place in which to deposit his prisoner until the moment of his execution. Several inducements urged Sergeant Hollister to this determination, among which was the absence of the washerwoman, who lay before the kitchen fire, dreaming that the corps was attacking a party of the enemy, and mistaking the noise that proceeded from her own nose for the bugles of the Virginians sounding the charge. Another was the peculiar opinions that the veteran entertained of life and death, and by which he was distinguished in the corps as a man of most exemplary piety and holiness of life. The sergeant was more than fifty years of age, and for half that period he had borne arms. The constant recurrence of sudden deaths before his eyes had produced an effect on him differing greatly from that which was the usual moral consequence of such scenes; and he had become not only the most steady, but the most trustworthy soldier in his troop. Captain Lawton had rewarded his fidelity by making him its orderly.

Followed by Birch, the sergeant proceeded in silence to the door of the intended prison, and, throwing it open with one hand, he held a lantern with the other to light the pedler to his prison. Seating himself on a cask, that contained some of Betty's favorite beverage, the sergeant motioned to Birch to occupy another, in the same manner. The lantern was placed on the floor, when the dragoon, after looking his prisoner steadily in the face, observed, —

"You look as if you would meet death like a man; and I have brought you to a spot where you can tranquilly arrange your thoughts, and be quiet and undisturbed."

"'Tis a fearful place to prepare for the last change in," said Harvey, gazing around his little prison with a vacant eye.

"Why, for the matter of that," returned the veteran, "it can reckon but little, in the great account, where a man parades his thoughts for the last review, so that he finds them fit to pass the muster of another world. I have a

small book here, which I make it a point to read a little in, whenever we are about to engage, and I find it a great strengthener in time of need." While speaking, he took a Bible from his pocket, and offered it to the pedler. Birch received the volume with habitual reverence; but there was an abstracted air about him, and a wandering of the eye, that induced his companion to think that alarm was getting the mastery of the pedler's feelings; accordingly, he proceeded in what he conceived to be the offices of consolation.

"If anything lies heavy on your mind, now is the best time to get rid of it — if you have done any wrong to any one, I promise you, on the word of an honest dragoon, to lend you a helping hand to see them righted."

"There are few who have not done so," said the pedler, turning his vacant gaze once more on his companion.

"True — 'tis natural to sin; but it sometimes happens that a man does what at other times he may be sorry for. One would not wish to die with any very heavy sin on his conscience, after all."

Harvey had by this time thoroughly examined the place in which he was to pass the night, and saw no means of escape. But as hope is ever the last feeling to desert the human breast, the pedler gave the dragoon more of his attention, fixing on his sunburnt features such searching looks, that Sergeant Hollister lowered his eyes before the wild expression which he met in the gaze of his prisoner.

"I have been taught to lay the burden of my sins at the feet of my Saviour," replied the pedler.

"Why, yes — all that is well enough," returned the other; "but justice should be done while there is opportunity. There have been stirring times in this country since the war began, and many have been deprived of their rightful goods. I oftentimes find it hard to reconcile even my lawful plunder to a tender conscience."

"These hands," said the pedler, stretching forth his meagre, bony fingers, "have spent years in toil, but not a moment in pilfering."

"It is well that it is so," said the honest-hearted soldier, "and, no doubt, you now feel it a great consolation. There are three great sins, that, if a man can keep his conscience clear of, why, by the mercy of God, he may hope to pass muster with the saints in heaven: they are stealing, murdering, and desertion."

"Thank God!" said Birch, with fervor, "I have never yet taken the life of a fellow-creature."

"As to killing a man in lawful battle, that is no more than doing one's duty. If the cause is wrong, the sin of such a deed, you know, falls on the nation, and a man receives his punishment here with the rest of the people; but murdering in cold blood stands next to desertion as a crime in the eye of God."

"I never was a soldier, therefore never could desert," said the pedler, resting his face on his hand in a melancholy attitude.

"Why, desertion consists of more than quitting your colors, though that is certainly the worst kind; a man may desert his country in the hour of need."

Birch buried his face in both his hands, and his whole frame shook; the sergeant regarded him closely, but good feelings soon got the better of his antipathies, and he continued more mildly, —

"But still that is a sin which I think may be forgiven, if sincerely repented of; and it matters but little when or how a man dies, so that he dies like a Christian and a man. I recommend you to say your prayers, and then to get some rest, in order that you may do both. There is no hope of your being pardoned; for Colonel Singleton has sent down the most positive orders to take your life whenever we met you. No, no — nothing can save you."

"You say the truth," cried Birch. "It is now too late — I have destroyed my only safeguard. But *he* will do my memory justice at least."

"What safeguard?" asked the sergeant, with awakened curiosity.

"'Tis nothing," replied the pedler, recovering his nat-

ural manner, and lowering his face to avoid the earnest looks of his companion.

"And who is he?"

"No one," added Harvey, anxious to say no more.

"Nothing and no one can avail but little now," said the sergeant, rising to go; "lay yourself on the blanket of Mrs. Flanagan, and get a little sleep; I will call you betimes in the morning; and from the bottom of my soul I wish I could be of some service to you, for I dislike greatly to see a man hung up like a dog."

"Then *you* might save me from this ignominious death," said Birch, springing to his feet, and catching the dragoon by the arm. "And, oh! what will I not give you in reward!"

"In what manner?" asked the sergeant, looking at him in surprise.

"See," said the pedler, producing several guineas from his person; "these are nothing to what I will give you, if you will assist me to escape."

"Were you the man whose picture is on the gold, I would not listen to such a crime," said the trooper, throwing the money on the floor with contempt. "Go — go, poor wretch, and make your peace with God; for it is He only that can be of service to you now."

The sergeant took up the lantern, and, with some indignation in his manner, he left the pedler to sorrowful meditations on his approaching fate. Birch sunk, in momentary despair, on the pallet of Betty, while his guardian proceeded to give the necessary instructions to the sentinels for his safe-keeping.

Hollister concluded his injunctions to the man in the shed, by saying, "Your life will depend on his not escaping. Let none enter or quit the room till morning."

"But," said the trooper, "my orders are, to let the washerwoman pass in and out, as she pleases."

"Well, let her then; but be careful that this wily pedler does not get out in the folds of her petticoats." He then continued his walk, giving similar orders to each of the sentinels near the spot.

For some time after the departure of the sergeant, silence prevailed within the solitary prison of the pedler, until the dragoon at his door heard his loud breathings, which soon rose into the regular cadence of one in a deep sleep. The man continued walking his post, musing on an indifference to life which could allow nature its customary rest, even on the threshold of the grave. Harvey Birch had, however, been a name too long held in detestation by every man in the corps, to suffer any feelings of commiseration to mingle with these reflections of the sentinel; for, notwithstanding the consideration and kindness manifested by the sergeant, there probably was not another man of his rank in the whole party who would have discovered equal benevolence to the prisoner, or who would not have imitated the veteran in rejecting the bribe, although probably from a less worthy motive. There was something of disappointed vengeance in the feelings of the man who watched the door of the room on finding his prisoner enjoying a sleep of which he himself was deprived, and at his exhibiting such obvious indifference to the utmost penalty that military rigor could inflict on all his treason to the cause of liberty and America. More than once he felt prompted to disturb the repose of the pedler by taunts and revilings; but the discipline he was under, and a secret sense of shame at the brutality of the act, held him in subjection.

His meditations were, however, soon interrupted by the appearance of the washerwoman, who came staggering through the door that communicated with the kitchen, muttering execrations against the servants of the officers, who, by their waggery, had disturbed her slumbers before the fire. The sentinel understood enough of her maledictions to comprehend the case; but all his efforts to enter into conversation with the enraged woman were useless, and he suffered her to enter her room without explaining that it contained another inmate. The noise of her huge frame falling on the bed was succeeded by a silence that was soon interrupted by the renewed respiration of the pedler and within a few minutes Harvey continued to breathe

aloud, as if no interruption had occurred. The relief arrived at this moment. The sentinel, who felt nettled at the contempt of the pedler, after communicating his orders, while he was retiring, exclaimed to his successor, —

"You may keep yourself warm by dancing, John; the pedler spy has tuned his fiddle, you hear, and it will not be long before Betty will strike up, in her turn."

The joke was followed by a general laugh from the party, who marched on in performance of their duty. At this instant the door of the prison was opened, and Betty reappeared, staggering back again toward her former quarters.

"Stop," said the sentinel, catching her by her clothes; "are you sure the spy is not in your pocket?"

"Can't you hear the rascal snoring in my room, you dirty blackguard?" sputtered Betty, her whole frame shaking with rage; "and is it so ye would sarve a dacent famale, that a man must be put to sleep in the room wid her, ye rapscallion?"

"Pooh! do you mind a fellow who's to be hanged in the morning? You see he sleeps already; to-morrow he'll take a longer nap."

"Hands off, ye villain!" cried the washerwoman, relinquishing a small bottle that the trooper had succeeded in wresting from her. "But I'll go to Captain Jack, and know if it's orders to put a hang-gallows spy in my room; aye, even in my widowed bed, you tief!"

"Silence, old Jezebel!" said the fellow with a laugh, taking the bottle from his mouth to breathe, "or you will wake the gentleman — would you disturb a man in his last sleep?"

"I'll awake Captain Jack, you reprobate villain, and bring him here to see me righted: he will punish ye all, for imposing on a dacent widowed body, you marauder!"

With these words, which only extorted a laugh from the sentinel, Betty staggered round the end of the building, and made the best of her way towards the quarters of her favorite, Captain John Lawton, in search of redress. Neither the officer nor the woman, however, appeared

during the night, and nothing further occurred to disturb the repose of the pedler, who, to the astonishment of the different sentinels, continued by his breathing to manifest how little the gallows could affect his slumbers.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THE Skinners followed Captain Lawton with alacrity, towards the quarters occupied by the troop of that gentleman. The captain of dragoons had on all occasions manifested so much zeal for the cause in which he was engaged, was so regardless of personal danger when opposed to the enemy, and his stature and stern countenance contributed so much to render him terrific, that these qualities had, in some measure, procured him a reputation distinct from the corps in which he served. His intrepidity was mistaken for ferocity; and his hasty zeal, for the natural love of cruelty. On the other hand, a few acts of clemency, or, more properly speaking, of discriminating justice, had, with one portion of the community, acquired for Dunwoodie the character of undue forbearance. It is seldom that either popular condemnation or popular applause falls, exactly in the quantities earned, where it is merited.

While in the presence of the major, the leader of the gang had felt himself under that restraint which vice must ever experience in the company of acknowledged virtue; but having left the house, he at once conceived that he was under the protection of a congenial spirit. There was a gravity in the manner of Lawton, that deceived most of those who did not know him intimately; and it was a common saying in his troop, that "when the captain laughed, he was sure to punish." Drawing near his conductor, therefore, the leader commenced a confidential dialogue.

"'Tis always well for a man to know his friends from his enemies," said the half-licensed freebooter.

To this prefatory observation the captain made no other reply than a sound which the other interpreted into assent.

"I suppose Major Dunwoodie has the good opinion of Washington?" continued the Skinner, in a tone that rather expressed a doubt than asked a question.

"There are some who think so."

"Many of the friends of Congress in this county," the man proceeded, "wish the horse was led by some other officer; for my part, if I could only be covered by a troop now and then, I could do many an important piece of service to the cause, to which this capture of the pedler would be a trifle."

"Indeed! such as what?"

"For the matter of that, it could be made as profitable to the officer as it would be to us who did it," said the Skinner, with a look of the most significant meaning.

"But how?" asked Lawton, a little impatiently, and quickening his step to get out of the hearing of the rest of the party.

"Why, near the royal lines, even under the very guns of the heights, might be good picking if we had a force to guard us from De Lancey's[1] men, and to cover our retreat from being cut off by the way of King's Bridge."

"I thought the Refugees took all that game to themselves."

"They do a little at it; but they are obliged to be sparing among their own people. I have been down twice, under an agreement with them: the first time they acted

[1] The partisan corps called Cow-Boys in the parlance of the country, was commanded by Colonel De Lancey. This gentleman, for such he was by birth and education, rendered himself very odious to the Americans by his fancied cruelty, though there is no evidence of his being guilty of any acts unusual in this species of warfare.

Colonel De Lancey belonged to a family of the highest consequence in the American colonies, his uncle having died in the administration of the government of that of New York. He should not be confounded with other gentlemen of his name and family, many of whom served in the royal army. His cousin, Colonel Oliver De Lancey, was, at the time of our tale, adjutant-general of the British forces in America, having succeeded to the unfortunate André. The Cow-Boys were sometimes called Refugees, in consequence of their having taken refuge under the protection of the crown.

with honor; but the second they came upon us and drove us off, and took the plunder to themselves."

"That was a very dishonorable act, indeed; I wonder that an honorable man will associate with such rascals."

"It is necessary to have an understanding with some of them, or we might be taken; but a man without honor is worse than a brute. Do you think Major Dunwoodie is to be trusted?"

"You mean on honorable principles?"

"Certainly; you know Arnold was thought well of until the royal major was taken."

"Why, I do not believe Dunwoodie would sell his command as Arnold wished to do; neither do I think him exactly trustworthy in a delicate business like this of yours."

"That's just my notion," rejoined the Skinner, with a self-approving manner that showed how much he was satisfied with his own estimate of character.

By this time they had arrived at a better sort of farm-house, the very extensive out-buildings of which were in tolerable repair, for the times. The barns were occupied by the men of the troop, while the horses were arranged under the long sheds which protected the yard from the cold north wind. The latter were quietly eating, with saddles on their backs and bridles thrown on their necks, ready to be bitted and mounted at the shortest warning. Lawton excused himself for a moment, and entered his quarters. He soon returned, holding in his hand one of the common stable-lanterns, and led the way towards a large orchard that surrounded the buildings on three sides. The gang followed the trooper in silence, believing his object to be facility of communicating further on this interesting topic, without the danger of being overheard.

Approaching the captain, the Skinner renewed the discourse, with a view of establishing further confidence, and of giving his companion a more favorable opinion of his own intellects.

"Do you think the colonies will finally get the better of the king?" he inquired, with a little of the importance of a politician

"Get the better!" echoed the captain with impetuosity — then checking himself, he continued, "no doubt they will. If the French will give us arms and money, we can drive out the royal troops in six months."

"Well, so I hope we shall soon; and then we shall have a free government, and we, who fight for it, will get our reward."

"Oh!" cried Lawton, "your claims will be indisputable; while all these vile Tories who live at home peaceably, to take care of their farms, will be held in the contempt they merit. You have no farm, I suppose?"

"Not yet — but it will go hard if I do not find one before the peace is made."

"Right; study your own interests, and you study the interests of your country; press the point of your own services, and rail at the Tories, and I'll bet my spurs against a rusty nail that you get to be a county clerk at least."

"Don't you think Paulding's[1] party were fools in not letting the royal adjutant-general escape?" said the man, thrown off his guard by the freedom of the captain's manner.

"Fools!" cried Lawton, with a bitter laugh; "aye, fools indeed; King George would have paid them better, for he is richer. He would have made them gentlemen for their lives. But, thank God! there is a pervading spirit in the people that seems miraculous. Men who have nothing, act as if the wealth of the Indies depended on their fidelity; all are not villains like yourself, or we should have been slaves to England years ago."

"How!" exclaimed the Skinner, starting back, and dropping his musket to the level of the other's breast; "am I betrayed, and are you my enemy?"

"Miscreant!" shouted Lawton, his sabre ringing in its

[1] The author must have intended some allusion to an individual, which is too local to be understood by the general reader.

André, as is well known, was arrested by three countrymen, who were on the lookout for predatory parties of the enemy: the principal man of this party was named Paulding. The disinterested manner in which they refused the offers of their captive is matter of history.

steel scabbard, as he struck the musket of the fellow from his hands, "offer but again to point your gun at me, and I'll cleave you to the middle."

"And you will not pay us, then, Captain Lawton?" said the Skinner, trembling in every joint, for just then he saw a party of mounted dragoons silently encircling the whole party.

"Oh! pay you — yes, you shall have the full measure of your reward. There is the money that Colonel Singleton sent down for the captors of the spy," throwing a bag of guineas with disdain at the other's feet. "But ground your arms, you rascals, and see that the money is truly told."

The intimidated band did as they were ordered; and while they were eagerly employed in this pleasing avocation, a few of Lawton's men privately knocked the flints out of their muskets.

"Well," cried the impatient captain, "is it right? — have you the promised reward?"

"There is just the money," said the leader; "and we will now go to our homes, with your permission."

"Hold! so much to redeem our promise — now for justice; we pay you for taking a spy, but we punish you for burning, robbing, and murdering. Seize them, my lads, and give each of them the law of Moses — forty save one."

This command was given to no unwilling listeners; and in the twinkling of an eye the Skinners were stripped and fastened, by the halters of the party, to as many of the apple-trees as were necessary to furnish one to each of the gang. Swords were quickly drawn, and fifty branches were cut from the trees, like magic: from these were selected a few of the most supple of the twigs, and a willing dragoon was soon found to wield each of the weapons. Captain Lawton gave the word, humanely cautioning his men not to exceed the discipline prescribed by the Mosaic law, and the uproar of Babel commenced in the orchard. The cries of the leader were easily to be distinguished above those of his men; a circumstance which might be accounted for, by Captain Lawton's reminding his corrector that he had to deal with an officer, and he should remember and pay him

unusual honor. The flagellation was executed with great neatness and dispatch, and it was distinguished by no irregularity, excepting that none of the disciplinarians began to count until they had tried their whips by a dozen or more blows, by the way, as they said themselves, of finding out the proper places to strike. As soon as this summary operation was satisfactorily completed, Lawton directed his men to leave the Skinners to replace their own clothes, and to mount their horses; for they were a party who had been detached for the purpose of patrolling lower down in the county.

"You see, my friend," said the captain to the leader of the Skinners, after he had prepared himself to depart, "I can cover you to some purpose, when necessary. If we meet often, you will be covered with scars, which, if not very honorable, will at least be merited."

The fellow made no reply. He was busy with his musket, and hastening his comrades to march; when, everything being ready, they proceeded sullenly towards some rocks at no great distance, which were overhung by a deep wood. The moon was just rising, and the group of dragoons could easily be distinguished where they had been left. Suddenly turning, the whole gang leveled their pieces and drew the triggers. The action was noticed, and the snapping of the locks was heard by the soldiers, who returned their futile attempt with a laugh of derision, the captain crying aloud, —

"Ah! rascals, I knew you, and have taken away your flints."

"You should have taken away that in my pouch, too," shouted the leader, firing his gun in the next instant. The bullet grazed the ear of Lawton, who laughed as he shook his head, saying, "A miss was as good as a mile." One of the dragoons had seen the preparations of the Skinner — who had been left alone by the rest of his gang, as soon as they had made their abortive attempt at revenge — and was in the act of plunging his spurs into his horse as the fellow fired. The distance to the rocks was but small, yet the speed of the horse compelled the leader to abandon both money and musket, to effect his escape. The soldier re-

turned with his prizes, and offered them to the acceptance of his captain; but Lawton rejected them, telling the man to retain them himself, until the rascal appeared in person to claim his property. It would have been a business of no small difficulty for any tribunal then existing in the new States to have enforced a restitution of the money; for it was shortly after most equitably distributed, by the hands of Sergeant Hollister, among a troop of horse. The patrol departed, and the captain slowly returned to his quarters, with an intention of retiring to rest. A figure moving rapidly among the trees, in the direction of the wood whither the Skinners had retired, caught his eye, and, wheeling on his heel, the cautious partisan approached it, and, to his astonishment, saw the washerwoman at that hour of the night, and in such a place.

"What, Betty! walking in your sleep, or dreaming while awake?" cried the trooper; "are you not afraid of meeting with the ghost of ancient Jenny in this her favorite pasture?"

"Ah, sure, Captain Jack," returned the sutler in her native accent, and reeling in a manner that made it difficult for her to raise her head, "it's not Jenny, or her ghost, that I'm saaking, but some yarbs for the wounded. And it's the vartue of the rising moon, as it jist touches them, that I want. They grow under yon rocks, and I must hasten, or the charm will lose its power."

"Fool, you are fitter for your pallet than for wandering among those rocks: a fall from one of them would break your bones; besides, the Skinners have fled to those heights, and should you fall in with them, they would revenge on you a sound flogging they have just received from me. Better return, old woman, and finish your nap; we march in the morning."

Betty disregarded his advice, and continued her devious route to the hill-side. For an instant, as Lawton mentioned the Skinners, she had paused, but immediately resuming her course, she was soon out of sight, among the trees.

As the captain entered his quarters, the sentinel at the door inquired if he had met Mrs. Flanagan, and added that

she had passed there, filling the air with threats against her tormentors at the "Hotel," and inquiring for the captain in search of redress. Lawton heard the man in astonishment — appeared struck with a new idea — walked several yards towards the orchard, and returned again; for several minutes he paced rapidly to and fro before the door of the house, and then hastily entering it, he threw himself on a bed in his clothes, and was soon in a profound sleep.

In the mean time, the gang of marauders had successfully gained the summit of the rocks, and, scattering in every direction, they buried themselves in the depths of the wood. Finding, however, there was no pursuit, which indeed would have been impracticable for horse, the leader ventured to call his band together with a whistle, and in a short time he succeeded in collecting his discomfited party, at a point where they had but little to apprehend from any enemy.

"Well," said one of the fellows, while a fire was lighting to protect them against the air, which was becoming severely cold, "there is an end to our business in West-Chester. The Virginia horse will soon make the county too hot to hold us."

"I'll have his blood," muttered the leader, "if I die for it the next instant."

"Oh, you are very valiant here, in the wood," cried the other, with a savage laugh; "why did you, who boast so much of your aim, miss your man, at thirty yards?"

"'Twas the horseman that disturbed me, or I would have ended this Captain Lawton on the spot; besides, the cold had set me a-shivering, and I had no longer a steady hand."

"Say it was fear, and you will tell no lie," said his comrade with a sneer. "For my part, I think I shall never be cold again; my back burns as if a thousand gridirons were laid on it."

"And you would tamely submit to such usage, and kiss the rod that beat you?"

"As for kissing the rod, it would be no easy matter. Mine was broken into so small pieces, on my own shoulders, that it would be difficult to find one big enough to

kiss; but I would rather submit to lose half my skin, than to lose the whole of it, with my ears in the bargain. And such will be our fates, if we tempt this mad Virginian again. God willing, I would at any time give him enough of my hide to make a pair of jack-boots, to get out of his hands with the remainder. If you had known when you were well off, you would have stuck to Major Dunwoodie, who don't know half so much of our evil-doings."

"Silence, you talking fool!" shouted the enraged leader; "your prating is sufficient to drive a man mad; is it not enough to be robbed and beaten, but we must be tormented with your folly? — help to get out the provisions, if any is left in the wallet, and try and stop your mouth with food."

This injunction was obeyed, and the whole party, amidst sundry groans and contortions, excited by the disordered state of their backs, made their arrangements for a scanty meal. A large fire of dry wood was burning in the cleft of a rock, and at length they began to recover from the confusion of their flight, and to collect their scattered senses. Their hunger being appeased, and many of their garments thrown aside for the better opportunity of dressing their wounds, the gang began to plot measures of revenge. An hour was spent in this manner, and various expedients were proposed; but as they all depended on personal prowess for their success, and were attended by great danger, they were of course rejected. There was no possibility of approaching the troops by surprise, their vigilance being ever on the watch; and the hope of meeting Captain Lawton, away from his men, was equally forlorn, for the trooper was constantly engaged in his duty, and his movements were so rapid, that any opportunity of meeting with him, at all, must depend greatly on accident. Besides, it was by no means certain that such an interview would result happily for themselves. The cunning of the trooper was notorious; and rough and broken as was West-Chester, the fearless partisan was known to take desperate leaps, and stone walls were but slight impediments to the charges of the south-

ern horse. Gradually, the conversation took another direction, until the gang determined on a plan which should both revenge themselves, and at the same time offer some additional stimulus to their exertions. The whole business was accurately discussed, the time fixed, and the manner adopted; in short, nothing was wanting to the previous arrangement for this deed of villainy, when they were aroused by a voice calling aloud, —

"This way, Captain Jack — here are the rascals 'ating by a fire — this way, and murder the t'ieves where they sit — quick, l'ave your horses and shoot your pistols!"

This terrific summons was enough to disturb all the philosophy of the gang. Springing on their feet, they rushed deeper into the wood, and having already agreed upon a place of rendezvous previously to their intended expedition, they dispersed towards the four quarters of the heavens. Certain sounds and different voices were heard calling on each other, but as the marauders were well trained to speed of foot, they were soon lost in the distance.

It was not long before Betty Flanagan emerged from the darkness, and very coolly took possession of what the Skinners had left behind them; namely, food, and divers articles of dress. The washerwoman deliberately seated herself, and made a meal with great apparent satisfaction. For an hour, she sat with her head upon her hand, in deep musing; then she gathered together such articles of the clothes, as seemed to suit her fancy, and retired into the wood, leaving the fire to throw its glimmering light on the adjacent rocks, until its last brand died away, and the place was abandoned to solitude and darkness.

CHAPTER XIX.

No longer then perplex the breast —
When thoughts torment, the first are best;
'Tis mad to go, 'tis death to stay!
Away, to Orra, haste away.

LAPLAND LOVE SONG.

WHILE his comrades were sleeping, in perfect forgetfulness of their hardships and dangers, the slumbers of Dunwoodie were broken and unquiet. After spending a night of restlessness, he arose, unrefreshed, from the rude bed where he had thrown himself in his clothes, and, without awaking any of the group around him, he wandered into the open air in search of relief. The soft rays of the moon were just passing away in the more distinct light of the morning; the wind had fallen, and the rising mists gave the promise of another of those autumnal days, which, in this unstable climate, succeed a tempest with the rapid transitions of magic. The hour had not yet arrived when he intended moving from his present position; and, willing to allow his warriors all the refreshment that circumstances would permit, he strolled towards the scene of the Skinners' punishment, musing upon the embarrassments of his situation, and uncertain how he should reconcile his sense of duty with his love. Although Dunwoodie himself placed the most implicit reliance on the captain's purity of intention, he was by no means assured that a board of officers would be equally credulous; and, independently of all feelings of private regard, he felt certain that with the execution of Henry would be destroyed all hopes of a union with his sister. He had dispatched an officer, the preceding evening, to Colonel Singleton, who was in command of the advance posts, reporting the capture of the British captain, and, after giving his own

opinion of his innocence, requesting orders as to the manner in which he was to dispose of his prisoner. These orders might be expected, every hour, and his uneasiness increased, in proportion as the moment approached when his friend might be removed from his protection. In this disturbed state of mind, the major wandered through the orchard, and was stopped in his walk by arriving at the base of those rocks which had protected the Skinners in their flight, before he was conscious whither his steps had carried him. He was about to turn, and retrace his path to his quarters, when he was startled by a voice, bidding him —

"Stand or die!"

Dunwoodie turned in amazement, and beheld the figure of a man placed at a little distance above him on a shelving rock, with a musket leveled at himself. The light was not yet sufficiently powerful to reach the recesses of that gloomy spot, and a second look was necessary before he discovered, to his astonishment, that the pedler stood before him. Comprehending, in an instant, the danger of his situation, and disdaining to implore mercy or to retreat, had the latter been possible, the youth cried firmly, —

"If I am to be murdered, fire! I will never become your prisoner."

"No, Major Dunwoodie," said Birch, lowering his musket, "it is neither my intention to capture nor to slay."

"What then would you have, mysterious being?" said Dunwoodie, hardly able to persuade himself that the form he saw was not a creature of the imagination.

"Your good opinion," answered the pedler, with emotion; "I would wish all good men to judge me with lenity."

"To you it must be indifferent what may be the judgment of men; for you seem to be beyond the reach of their sentence."

"God spares the lives of his servants to his own time," said the pedler, solemnly: "a few hours ago I was your prisoner, and threatened with the gallows; now you are mine; but, Major Dunwoodie, you are free. There are

men abroad who would treat you less kindly. Of what service would that sword be to you against my weapon and a steady hand? Take the advice of one who has never harmed you, and who never will. Do not trust yourself in the skirts of any wood, unless in company and mounted."

"And have you comrades, who have assisted you to escape, and who are less generous than yourself?"

"No — no, I am alone truly — none know me but my God and *him*."

"And who?" asked the major, with an interest he could not control.

"None," continued the pedler, recovering his composure. "But such is not your case, Major Dunwoodie; you are young and happy; there are those that are dear to you, and such are not far away — danger is near them you love most — danger within and without — double your watchfulness — strengthen your patrols — and be silent. With your opinion of me, should I tell you more, you would suspect an ambush. But remember and guard them you love best."

The pedler discharged the musket in the air, and threw it at the feet of his astonished auditor. When surprise and the smoke allowed Dunwoodie to look again on the rock where he had stood, the spot was vacant.

The youth was aroused from the stupor, which had been created by this strange scene, by the trampling of horses, and the sound of the bugles. A patrol was drawn to the spot by the report of the musket, and the alarm had been given to the corps. Without entering into any explanation with his men, the major returned quickly to his quarters, where he found the whole squadron under arms, in battle array, impatiently awaiting the appearance of their leader. The officer whose duty it was to superintend such matters, had directed a party to lower the sign of the Hotel Flanagan, and the post was already arranged for the execution of the spy. On hearing from the major that the musket was discharged by himself, and was probably one of those dropped by the Skinners (for by this

time Dunwoodie had learnt the punishment inflicted by Lawton, but chose to conceal his own interview with Birch), his officers suggested the propriety of executing their prisoner before they marched. Unable to believe that all he had seen was not a dream, Dunwoodie, followed by many of his officers, and preceded by Sergeant Hollister, went to the place which was supposed to contain the pedler.

"Well, sir," said the major to the sentinel who guarded the door, "I trust you have your prisoner in safety."

"He is yet asleep," replied the man, "and he makes such a noise, I could hardly hear the bugles sound the alarm."

"Open the door and bring him forth."

The order was obeyed; but, to the utter amazement of the honest veteran who entered the prison, he found the room in no little disorder — the coat of the pedler where his body ought to have been, and part of the wardrobe of Betty scattered in disorder on the floor. The washerwoman herself occupied the pallet, in profound mental oblivion, clad as when last seen, excepting a little black bonnet, which she so constantly wore, that it was commonly thought she made it perform the double duty of both day and night cap. The noise of their entrance, and the exclamations of the party, awoke the woman.

"Is it the breakfast that's wanting?" said Betty, rubbing her eyes; "faith, ye look as if ye would ate myself — but patience a little, darlings, and ye'll see sich a fry as never was."

"Fry!" echoed the sergeant, forgetful of his religious philosophy, and the presence of his officers; "we'll have you roasted, Jezebel! — you've helped that damned pedler to escape."

"Jezebel back agi'n in your own teeth, and damned pidler too, Mr. Sargeant!" cried Betty, who was easily roused; "what have I to do with pidlers, or escapes? I might have been a pidler's lady, and worn my silks, if I'd had Sawny M'Twill, instead of tagging at the heels of a parcel of dragooning rapscallions, who don't know how to trate a lone body with dacency."

"The fellow has left my Bible," said the veteran, taking the book from the floor; "instead of spending his time in reading it to prepare for his end like a good Christian, he has been busy in laboring to escape."

"And who would stay and be hanged like a dog?" cried Betty, beginning to comprehend the case; "'tisn't every one that's born to meet with sich an ind — like yourself, Mr. Hollister."

"Silence!" said Dunwoodie. "This must be inquired into closely, gentlemen; there is no outlet but the door, and there he could not pass, unless the sentinel connived at his escape, or was asleep at his post: call up the guard."

As these men were not paraded, curiosity had already drawn them to the place, and they one and all, with the exception of him before mentioned, denied that any person had passed out. The individual in question acknowledged that Betty had gone by him, but pleaded his orders in justification.

"You lie, you t'ief — you lie!" shouted Betty, who had impatiently listened to his exculpation; "would ye slanderize a lone woman, by saying she walks a camp at midnight? Here have I been slaping the long night, swaatly as the sucking babe."

"Here, sir," said the sergeant, turning respectfully to Dunwoodie, "is something written in my Bible that was not in it before; for having no family to record, I would not suffer any scribbling in the sacred book."

One of the officers read aloud, —

"These certify, that if suffered to get free, it is by God's help alone, to whose divine aid I humbly riccommind myself. I'm forced to take the woman's clothes, but in her pocket is a ricompinse. Witness my hand — HARVEY BIRCH."

"What!" roared Betty, "has the t'ief robbed a lone woman of her all! — hang him — catch him and hang him, major; if there's law or justice in the land."

"Examine your pocket," said one of the youngsters, who was enjoying the scene, careless of the consequences.

"Ah! faith," cried the washerwoman, producing a guinea,

"but he is a jewel of a pidler! Long life and a brisk trade to him, say I; he is wilcome to the duds — and if he is ever hanged, many a bigger rogue will go free."

Dunwoodie turned to leave the apartment, and he saw Captain Lawton standing with folded arms, contemplating the scene with profound silence. His manner, so different from his usual impetuosity and zeal, struck his commander as singular. Their eyes met, and they walked together for a few minutes in close conversation, when Dunwoodie returned, and dismissed the guard to their place of rendezvous. Sergeant Hollister, however, continued along with Betty, who, having found none of her vestments disturbed but such as the guinea more than paid for, was in high good-humor. The washerwoman had for a long time looked on the veteran with the eyes of affection; and she had determined within herself to remove certain delicate objections which had long embarrassed her peculiar situation, as respected the corps, by making the sergeant the successor of her late husband. For some time past the trooper had seemed to flatter this preference; and Betty, conceiving that her violence might have mortified her suitor, was determined to make him all the amends in her power. Besides, rough and uncouth as she was, the washerwoman had still enough of her sex to know that the moments of reconciliation were the moments of power. She therefore poured out a glass of her morning beverage, and handed it to her companion as a peace-offering.

"A few warm words between fri'nds are a trifle, ye must be knowing, sargeant," said the washerwoman; "it was Michael Flanagan that I ever calumn'ated the most when I was loving him the best."

"Michael was a good soldier and a brave man," said the trooper finishing the glass; "our troop was covering the flank of his regiment when he fell, and I rode over his body myself during the day; poor fellow! he lay on his back, and looked as composed as if he had died a natural death after a year's consumption."

"Oh! Michael was a great consumer, and be sartain; two such as us make dreadful inroads in the stock, sargeant. But

ye're a sober discrate man, Mister Hollister, and would be a helpmate indeed."

"Why, Mrs. Flanagan, I've tarried to speak on a subject that lies heavy at my heart, and I will now open my mind, if you've leisure to listen."

"Is it listen?" cried the impatient woman; "and I'd listen to you, sargeant, if the officers never ate another mouthful: but take a second drop, dear; 'twill encourage you to spake freely."

"I am already bold enough in so good a cause," returned the veteran, rejecting her bounty. "Betty, do you think it was really the pedler spy that I placed in this room the last night?"

"And who should it be else, darling?"

"The evil one."

"What, the divil?"

"Aye, even Belzebub, disguised as the pedler; and them fellows we thought to be Skinners were his imps!"

"Well sure, sargeant dear, ye're but little out this time, any way; for if the divil's imps go at large in the county West-Chester, sure it is the Skinners, themselves."

"Mrs. Flanagan, I mean in their incarnate spirits; the evil one knew that there was no one we would arrest sooner than the pedler Birch, and he took on his appearance to gain admission to your room."

"And what should the divil be wanting of me?" cried Betty, tartly; "and isn't there divils enough in the corps already, without one's coming from the bottomless pit to frighten a lone body?"

"'Twas in mercy to you, Betty, that he was permitted to come. You see he vanished through the door in your form, which is a symbol of your fate, unless you mend your life. Oh! I noticed how he trembled when I gave him the good book. Would any Christian, think you, my dear Betty, write in a Bible in this way; unless it might be the matter of births and deaths, and such lawful chronicles?"

The washerwoman was pleased with the softness of her lover's manner, but dreadfully scandalized at his insinuation. She however preserved her temper, and with the quickness of her own country's people, rejoined. —

"And would the divil have paid for the clothes, think ye? — aye, and overpaid."

"Doubtless the money is base," said the sergeant, a little staggered at such an evidence of honesty in one of whom, as to generals, he thought so meanly. "He tempted me with his glittering coin, but the Lord gave me strength to resist."

"The goold looks well; but I'll change it, any way, with Captain Jack, the day. He is niver a bit afeard of any divil of them all!"

"Betty, Betty," said her companion, "do not speak so disreverently of the evil spirit; he is ever at hand, and will owe you a grudge, for your language."

"Pooh! if he has any bowels at all, he won't mind a fillip or two from a poor lone woman; I'm sure no other Christian would."

"But the dark one has no bowels, except to devour the children of men," said the sergeant, looking around him in horror; "and it's best to make friends everywhere, for there is no telling what may happen till it comes. But, Betty, no man could have got out of this place, and passed all the sentinels, without being known: take awful warning from the visit therefore" —

Here the dialogue was interrupted by a peremptory summons to the sutler to prepare the morning's repast, and they were obliged to separate; the woman secretly hoping that the interest the sergeant manifested was more earthly than he imagined; and the man, bent on saving a soul from the fangs of the dark spirit that was prowling through their camp in quest of victims.

During the breakfast several expresses arrived, one of which brought intelligence of the actual force and destination of the enemy's expedition that was out on the Hudson; and another, orders to send Captain Wharton to the first post above, under the escort of a body of dragoons. These last instructions, or rather commands, for they admitted of no departure from their letter, completed the sum of Dunwoodie's uneasiness. The despair and misery of Frances were constantly before his eyes, and fifty times he was tempted to throw himself on his horse and gallop to the

Locusts ; but an uncontrollable feeling prevented. In obedience to the commands of his superior, an officer, with a small party, was sent to the cottage to conduct Henry Wharton to the place directed; and the gentleman who was intrusted with the execution of the order was charged with a letter from Dunwoodie to his friend, containing the most cheering assurances of his safety, as well as the strongest pledges of his own unceasing exertions in his favor. Lawton was left with part of his own troop, in charge of the few wounded ; and as soon as the men were refreshed, the encampment broke up, the main body marching towards the Hudson. Dunwoodie repeated his injunctions to Captain Lawton again and again — dwelt on every word that had fallen from the pedler, and canvassed, in every possible manner that his ingenuity could devise, the probable meaning of his mysterious warnings, until no excuse remained for delaying his own departure. Suddenly recollecting, however, that no directions had been given for the disposal of Colonel Wellmere, instead of following the rear of the column, the major yielded to his desires, and turned down the road which led to the Locusts. The horse of Dunwoodie was fleet as the wind, and scarcely a minute seemed to have passed before he gained sight, from an eminence, of the lonely vale, and as he was plunging into the bottom lands that formed its surface, he caught a glimpse of Henry Wharton and his escort, at a distance, defiling through a pass which led to the posts above. This sight added to the speed of the anxious youth, who now turned the angle of the hill that opened to the valley, and came suddenly on the object of his search. Frances had followed the party which guarded her brother, at a distance ; and as they vanished from her sight, she felt deserted by all that she most prized in this world. The unaccountable absence of Dunwoodie, with the shock of parting from Henry under such circumstances, had entirely subdued her fortitude, and she had sunk on a stone by the roadside, sobbing as if her heart would break. Dunwoodie sprang from his charger, threw the reins over the neck of the animal, and in a moment he was by the side of the weeping girl.

"Frances — my own Frances!" he exclaimed, "why

this distress? — let not the situation of your brother create any alarm. As soon as the duty I am now on is completed, I will hasten to the feet of Washington, and beg his release. The Father of his Country will never deny such a boon to one of his favorite pupils."

"Major Dunwoodie, for your interest in behalf of my poor brother, I thank you," said the trembling girl, drying her eyes, and rising with dignity; "but such language addressed to me, surely, is improper."

"Improper! are you not mine — by the consent of your father — your aunt — your brother — nay, by your own consent, my sweet Frances?"

"I wish not, Major Dunwoodie, to interfere with the prior claims that any other lady may have to your affections," said Frances, struggling to speak with firmness.

"None other, I swear by Heaven, none other has any claim on me!" cried Dunwoodie, with fervor; "you alone are mistress of my inmost soul."

"You have practiced so much, and so successfully, Major Dunwoodie, that it is no wonder you excel in deceiving the credulity of my sex," returned Frances, attempting a smile, which the tremulousness of her muscles smothered in its birth.

"Am I a villain, Miss Wharton, that you receive me with such language? — when have I ever deceived you, Frances? who has practiced in this manner on your purity of heart?"

"Why has not Major Dunwoodie honored the dwelling of his intended father with his presence lately? Did he forget it contained one friend on a bed of sickness, and another in deep distress? Has it escaped his memory that it held his intended wife? Or is he fearful of meeting more than one that can lay a claim to that title? Oh, Peyton — Peyton, how have I been deceived in you! with the foolish credulity of my youth, I thought you all that was brave, noble, generous, and loyal."

"Frances, I see how you have deceived yourself," cried Dunwoodie, his face in a glow of fire; "you do me injustice; I swear by all that is most dear to me, that you do me injustice."

"Swear not, Major Dunwoodie," interrupted Frances, her fine countenance lighting with the lustre of womanly pride; "the time is gone by for me to credit oaths."

"Miss Wharton, would you have me a coxcomb — make me contemptible in my own eyes, by boasting with the hope of raising myself in your estimation?"

"Flatter not yourself that the task is so easy, sir," returned Frances, moving towards the cottage; "we converse together in private for the last time; but — possibly — my father would welcome my mother's kinsman."

"No, Miss Wharton, I cannot enter his dwelling now: I should act in a manner unworthy of myself. You drive me from you, Frances, in despair. I am going on desperate service, and may not live to return. Should fortune prove severe, at least do my memory justice; remember that the last breathings of my soul will be for your happiness." So saying, he had already placed his foot in the stirrup, but his youthful mistress, turning on him an eye that pierced his soul, arrested the action.

"Peyton — Major Dunwoodie," she said, "can you ever forget the sacred cause in which you are enlisted? Duty both to your God and to your country forbids your doing anything rashly. The latter has need of your services; besides" — but her voice became choked, and she was unable to proceed.

"Besides what?" echoed the youth, springing to her side, and offering to take her hand in his own. Frances having, however, recovered herself, coldly repulsed him, and continued her walk homeward.

"Is this our parting!" cried Dunwoodie, in agony; "am I a wretch, that you treat me so cruelly? You have never loved me, and wish to conceal your own fickleness by accusations that you will not explain."

Frances stopped short in her walk, and turned on him a look of so much purity and feeling, that, heart-stricken, Dunwoodie would have knelt at her feet for pardon; but motioning him for silence, she once more spoke: —

"Hear me, Major Dunwoodie, for the last time: it is a bitter knowledge when we first discover our own inferiority

but it is a truth that I have lately learnt. Against you I bring no charges — make no accusations; no, not willingly in my thoughts. Were my claims to your heart just, I am not worthy of you. It is not a feeble, timid girl, like me, that could make you happy. No, Peyton, you are formed for great and glorious actions, deeds of daring and renown, and should be united to a soul like your own; one that can rise above the weakness of her sex. I should be a weight to drag you to the dust; but with a different spirit in your companion, you might soar to the very pinnacle of earthly glory. To such a one, therefore, I resign you freely, if not cheerfully; and pray, oh, how fervently do I pray! that with such a one you may be happy."

"Lovely enthusiast!" cried Dunwoodie, "you know not yourself, nor me. It is a woman, mild, gentle, and dependent as yourself, that my very nature loves; deceive not yourself with visionary ideas of generosity, which will only make me miserable."

"Farewell, Major Dunwoodie," said the agitated girl, pausing for a moment to gasp for breath; "forget that you ever knew me — remember the claims of your bleeding country; and be happy."

"Happy!" repeated the youthful soldier, bitterly, as he saw her light form gliding through the gate of the lawn, and disappearing behind its shrubbery; "yes, I am now happy, indeed!"

Throwing himself into the saddle, he plunged his spurs into his horse, and soon overtook his squadron, which was marching slowly over the hilly roads of the county, to gain the banks of the Hudson.

But painful as were the feelings of Dunwoodie at this unexpected termination of the interview with his mistress, they were but light compared with those which were experienced by the fond girl herself. Frances had, with the keen eye of jealous love, easily detected the attachment of Isabella Singleton to Dunwoodie. Delicate and retiring herself, it never could present itself to her mind that this love had been unsought. Ardent in her own affections, and artless in their exhibition, she had early caught the eye of

the young soldier; but it required all the manly frankness of Dunwoodie to court her favor, and the most pointed devotion to obtain his conquest. This done, his power was durable, entire, and engrossing. But the unusual occurrences of the few preceding days, the altered mien of her lover during those events, his unwonted indifference to herself, and chiefly the romantic idolatry of Isabella, had aroused new sensations in her bosom. With a dread of her lover's integrity had been awakened the never-failing concomitant of the purest affection, a distrust of her own merits. In the moment of enthusiasm, the task of resigning her lover to another, who might be more worthy of him, seemed easy; but it is in vain that the imagination attempts to deceive the heart. Dunwoodie had no sooner disappeared, than our heroine felt all the misery of her situation; and if the youth found some relief in the cares of his command, Frances was less fortunate in the performance of a duty imposed on her by filial piety. The removal of his son had nearly destroyed the little energy of Mr. Wharton, who required all the tenderness of his remaining children to convince him that he was able to perform the ordinary functions of life.

CHAPTER XX.

Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces,
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces,
That man who hath a tongue I say is no man,
If with that tongue he cannot win a woman.
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

In making the arrangements by which Captain Lawton had been left, with Sergeant Hollister and twelve men, as a guard over the wounded, and heavy baggage of the corps, Dunwoodie had consulted not only the information which had been conveyed in the letter of Colonel Singleton, but the bruises of his comrade's body. In vain Lawton declared himself fit for any duty that man could perform, or plainly intimated that his men would never follow Tom Mason to a charge with the alacrity and confidence with which they followed himself; his commander was firm, and the reluctant captain was compelled to comply with as good a grace as he could assume. Before parting, Dunwoodie repeated his caution to keep a watchful eye on the inmates of the cottage; and especially enjoined him, if any movements of a particularly suspicious nature were seen in the neighborhood, to break up from his present quarters, and to move down with his party, and take possession of the domains of Mr. Wharton. A vague suspicion of danger to the family had been awakened in the breast of the major, by the language of the pedler, although he was unable to refer it to any particular source, or to understand why it was to be apprehended.

For some time after the departure of the troops, the captain was walking before the door of the "Hotel," inwardly cursing his fate, that condemned him to an inglorious idleness, at a moment when a meeting with the enemy might be expected, and replying to the occasional queries

of Betty, who, from the interior of the building, ever and anon demanded, in a high tone of voice, an explanation of various passages in the pedler's escape, which as yet she could not comprehend. At this instant he was joined by the surgeon, who had hitherto been engaged among his patients in a distant building, and was profoundly ignorant of everything that had occurred, even to the departure of the troops.

"Where are all the sentinels, John?" he inquired, as he gazed around with a look of curiosity, "and why are you here, alone?"

"Off — all off, with Dunwoodie, to the river. You and I are left here to take care of a few sick men and some women."

"I am glad, however," said the surgeon, "that Major Dunwoodie had consideration enough not to move the wounded. Here, you Mrs. Elizabeth Flanagan, hasten with some food, that I may appease my appetite. I have a dead body to dissect, and am in haste."

"And here, you Mister Doctor Archibald Sitgreaves," echoed Betty, showing her blooming countenance from a broken window of the kitchen, "you are ever a-coming too late; here is nothing to ate but the skin of Jenny, and the body ye're mintioning."

"Woman!" said the surgeon, in anger, "do you take me for a cannibal, that you address your filthy discourse to me, in this manner? I bid you hasten with such food as may be proper to be received into the stomach fasting."

"And I'm sure it's for a pop-gun that I should be taking you sooner than for a cannon-ball," said Betty, winking at the captain; "and I tell ye that it's fasting you must be, unless ye'll let me cook ye a steak from the skin of Jenny. The boys have ate me up intirely."

Lawton now interfered to preserve the peace, and assured the surgeon that he had already dispatched the proper persons in quest of food for the party. A little mollified with this explanation, the operator soon forgot his hunger, and declared his intention of proceeding to business at once.

"And where is your subject?" asked Lawton.

"The pedler," said the other, glancing a look at the sign-post. "I made Hollister put a stage so high that the neck would not be dislocated by the fall, and I intend making as handsome a skeleton of him, as there is in the States of North America; the fellow has good points, and his bones are well knit. I will make a perfect beauty of him. I have long been wanting something of this sort to send as a present to my old aunt in Virginia, who was so kind to me when a boy."

"The devil!" cried Lawton; "would you send the old woman a dead man's bones?"

"Why not?" said the surgeon; "what nobler object is there in nature than the figure of a man — and the skeleton may be called his elementary parts. But what has been done with the body?"

"Off too."

"Off! and who has dared to interfere with my perquisites?"

"Sure, jist the divil," said Betty; "and who'll be taking yeerself away some of these times too, without asking yeer lave."

"Silence, you witch!" said Lawton, with difficulty suppressing a laugh; "is this the manner in which to address an officer?"

"Who called me the filthy Elizabeth Flanagan?" cried the washerwoman, snapping her fingers contemptuously; "I can remimber a fri'nd for a year, and don't forgit an inimy for a month."

But the friendship or enmity of Mrs. Flanagan was alike indifferent to the surgeon, who could think of nothing but his loss; and Lawton was obliged to explain to his friend the apparent manner in which it had happened.

"And a lucky escape it was for ye, my jewel of a doctor," cried Betty, as the captain concluded. "Sargeant Hollister, who saw him face to face, as it might be, says it's Beelzeboob, and no pidler, unless it may be in a small matter of lies and thefts, and sich wickedness. Now a pretty figure ye would have been in cutting up Beelzeboob, if

the major had hanged him. I don't think it's very 'asy he would have been under yeer knife."

Thus doubly disappointed in his meal and his business, Sitgreaves suddenly declared his intention of visiting the Locusts, and inquiring into the state of Captain Singleton. Lawton was ready for the excursion; and mounting, they were soon on the road, though the surgeon was obliged to submit to a few more jokes from the washerwoman, before he could get out of hearing. For some time the two rode in silence, when Lawton, perceiving that his companion's temper was somewhat ruffled by his disappointments and Betty's attack, made an effort to restore the tranquillity of his feelings.

"That was a charming song, Archibald, that you commenced last evening, when we were interrupted by the party that brought in the pedler," he said: "the allusion to Galen was much to the purpose."

"I knew you would like it, Jack, when you had got the fumes of the wine out of your head. Poetry is a respectable art, though it wants the precision of the exact sciences, and the natural beneficence of the physical. Considered in reference to the wants of life, I should define poetry as an emollient, rather than as a succulent."

"And yet your ode was full of the meat of wit."

"Ode is by no means a proper term for the composition; I should term it a classical ballad."

"Very probably," said the trooper; "hearing only one verse, it was difficult to class the composition."

The surgeon involuntarily hemmed, and began to clear his throat, although scarcely conscious himself to what the preparation tended. But the captain, rolling his dark eyes towards his companion, and observing him to be sitting with great uneasiness on his horse, continued, —

"The air is still, and the road solitary — why not give the remainder? It is never too late to repair a loss."

"My dear John, if I thought it would correct the errors you have imbibed, from habit and indulgence, nothing could give me more pleasure."

"We are fast approaching some rocks on our left; the echo will double my satisfaction."

Thus encouraged, and somewhat impelled by the opinion that he both sang and wrote with taste, the surgeon set about complying with the request in sober earnest. Some little time was lost in clearing his throat, and getting the proper pitch of his voice; but no sooner were these two points achieved, than Lawton had the secret delight of hearing his friend commence —

"'Hast thou ever'" —

"Hush!" interrupted the trooper; "what rustling noise is that among the rocks?"

"It must have been the rushing of the melody. A powerful voice is like the breathing of the winds.

"'Hast thou ever'" —

"Listen!" said Lawton, stopping his horse. He had not done speaking, when a stone fell at his feet, and rolled harmlessly across the path.

"A friendly shot, that," cried the trooper; "neither the weapon, nor its force, implies much ill-will."

"Blows from stones seldom produce more than contusions," said the operator, bending his gaze in every direction in vain, in quest of the hand from which the missile had been hurled; "it must be meteoric; there is no living being in sight, except ourselves."

"It would be easy to hide a regiment behind those rocks," returned the trooper, dismounting, and taking the stone in his hand. "Oh! here is the explanation along with the mystery." So saying, he tore a piece of paper that had been ingeniously fastened to the small fragment of rock which had thus singularly fallen before him; and opening it, the captain read the following words, written in no very legible hand: —

"A musket bullet will go farther than a stone, and things more dangerous than yarbs for wounded men lie hid in the rocks of West-Chester. The horse may be good, but can he mount a precipice?"

"Thou sayest the truth, strange man," said Lawton "courage and activity would avail but little against assas-

sination and these rugged passes." Remounting his horse, he cried aloud, "Thanks, unknown friend; your caution will be remembered."

A meagre hand was extended for an instant over a rock, in the air, and afterwards nothing further was seen, or heard, in that quarter, by the soldiers.

"Quite an extraordinary interruption," said the astonished Sitgreaves, "and a letter of very mysterious meaning."

"Oh! 'tis nothing but the wit of some bumpkin, who thinks to frighten two of the Virginians by an artifice of this kind," said the trooper, placing the billet in his pocket; "but let me tell you, Mr. Archibald Sitgreaves, you were wanting to dissect, just now, a damned honest fellow."

"It was the pedler — one of the most notorious spies in the enemy's service; and I must say that I think it would be an honor to such a man to be devoted to the uses of science."

"He may be a spy — he must be one," said Lawton, musing; "but he has a heart above enmity, and a soul that would honor a soldier."

The surgeon turned a vacant eye on his companion as he uttered this soliloquy, while the penetrating looks of the trooper had already discovered another pile of rocks, which, jutting forward, nearly obstructed the highway that wound directly around its base.

"What the steed cannot mount, the foot of man can overcome," exclaimed the wary partisan. Throwing himself again from his saddle, and leaping a wall of stone, he began to ascend the hill at a pace which would soon have given him a bird's-eye view of the rocks in question, together with all their crevices. This movement was no sooner made, than Lawton caught a glimpse of the figure of a man stealing rapidly from his approach, and disappearing on the opposite side of the precipice.

"Spur, Sitgreaves — spur," shouted the trooper, dashing over every impediment in pursuit, "and murder the villain as he flies."

The former part of the request was promptly complied

with, and a few moments brought the surgeon in full view of a man armed with a musket, who was crossing the road, and evidently seeking the protection of the thick wood on its opposite side.

"Stop, my friend — stop until Captain Lawton comes up, if you please," cried the surgeon, observing him to flee with a rapidity that baffled his horsemanship. But as if the invitation contained new terrors, the footman redoubled his efforts, nor paused even to breathe, until he had reached his goal, when, turning on his heel, he discharged his musket towards the surgeon, and was out of sight in an instant. To gain the highway, and throw himself into his saddle, detained Lawton but a moment, and he rode to the side of his comrade just as the figure disappeared.

"Which way has he fled?" cried the trooper.

"John," said the surgeon, "am I not a non-combatant?"

"Whither has the rascal fled?" cried Lawton, impatiently.

"Where you cannot follow — into that wood. But I repeat, John, am I not a non-combatant?"

The disappointed trooper, perceiving that his enemy had escaped him, now turned his eyes, which were flashing with anger, upon his comrade, and gradually his muscles lost their rigid compression, his brow relaxed, and his look changed from its fierce expression, to the covert laughter which so often distinguished his countenance. The surgeon sat in dignified composure on his horse; his thin body erect, and his head elevated with the indignation of one conscious of having been unjustly treated.

"Why did you suffer the villain to escape?" demanded the captain. "Once within reach of my sabre, and I would have given you a subject for the dissecting table."

"'Twas impossible to prevent it," said the surgeon, pointing to the bars, before which he had stopped his horse. "The rogue threw himself on the other side of this fence, and left me where you see; nor would the man in the least attend to my remonstrances, or to an intimation that you wished to hold discourse with him."

"He was truly a discourteous rascal; but why did you

not leap the fence, and compel him to a halt? — you see but three of the bars are up, and Betty Flanagan could clear them on her cow."

The surgeon, for the first time, withdrew his eyes from the place where the fugitive had disappeared, and turned his look on his comrade. His head, however, was not permitted to lower itself in the least, as he replied, —

"I humbly conceive, Captain Lawton, that neither Mrs. Elizabeth Flanagan, nor her cow, is an example to be emulated by Doctor Archibald Sitgreaves: it would be but a sorry compliment to science, to say that a Doctor of Medicine had fractured both his legs, by injudiciously striking them against a pair of bar-posts." While speaking, the surgeon raised the limbs in question to a nearly horizontal position, an attitude which really appeared to bid defiance to anything like a passage for himself through the defile; but the trooper, disregarding this ocular proof of the impossibility of the movement, cried hastily, —

"Here was nothing to stop you, man; I could leap a platoon through, boot and thigh, without pricking with a single spur. Pshaw! I have often charged upon the bayonets of infantry, over greater difficulties than this."

"You will please to remember, Captain John Lawton, that I am not the riding-master of the regiment — nor a drill sergeant — nor a crazy cornet; no, sir — and I speak it with a due respect for the commission of the continental Congress — nor an inconsiderate captain, who regards his own life as little as that of his enemies. I am only, sir, a poor humble man of letters, a mere Doctor of Medicine, an unworthy graduate of Edinburgh, and a surgeon of dragoons; nothing more, I do assure you, Captain John Lawton." So saying, he turned his horse's head towards the cottage, and recommenced his ride.

"Aye, you speak the truth," muttered the dragoon; "had I but the meanest rider of my troop with me, I should have taken the scoundrel, and given at least one victim to the laws. But, Archibald, no man can ride well who straddles in this manner like the Colossus of Rhodes. You should depend less on your stirrup, and keep your seat by the power of the knee."

"With proper deference to your experience, Captain Lawton," returned the surgeon, "I conceive myself to be no incompetent judge of muscular action, whether in the knee, or any other part of the human frame. And although but humbly educated, I am not now to learn that the wider the base, the more firm is the superstructure."

"Would you fill a highway, in this manner, with one pair of legs, when half a dozen might pass together in comfort, stretching them abroad like the scythes of the ancient chariot wheels?"

The allusion to the practice of the ancients somewhat softened the indignation of the surgeon, and he replied, with rather less hauteur, —

"You should speak with reverence of the usages of those who have gone before us, and who, however ignorant they were in matters of science, and particularly that of surgery, yet furnished many brilliant hints to our own improvements. Now, sir, I have no doubt that Galen has operated on wounds occasioned by these very scythes that you mention, although we can find no evidence of the fact in contemporary writers. Ah! they must have given dreadful injuries, and, I doubt not, caused great uneasiness to the medical gentlemen of that day."

"Occasionally a body must have been left in two pieces, to puzzle the ingenuity of those gentry to unite. Yet, venerable and learned as they were, I doubt not they did it."

"What! unite two parts of the human body, that have been severed by an edged instrument, to any of the purposes of animal life?"

"That have been rent asunder by a scythe, and are united to do military duty," said Lawton.

"'Tis impossible — quite impossible," cried the surgeon; "it is in vain, Captain Lawton, that human ingenuity endeavors to baffle the efforts of nature. Think, my dear sir; in this case you separate all the arteries — injure all of the intestines — sever all of the nerves and sinews, and, what is of more consequence, you" —

"You have said enough, Dr. Sitgreaves, to convince a member of a rival school. Nothing shall ever tempt me

willingly to submit to be divided in this irretrievable manner."

"Certes, there is little pleasure in a wound which, from its nature, is incurable."

"I should think so," said Lawton dryly.

"What do you think is the greatest pleasure in life?" asked the operator suddenly.

"That must greatly depend on taste."

"Not at all," cried the surgeon; "it is in witnessing, or rather feeling, the ravages of disease repaired by the lights of science coöperating with nature. I once broke my little finger intentionally, in order that I might reduce the fracture and watch the cure: it was only on a small scale, you know, dear John; still the thrilling sensation excited by the knitting of the bone, aided by the contemplation of the art of man thus acting in unison with nature, exceeded any other enjoyment that I have ever experienced. Now, had it been one of the more important members, such as the leg or arm, how much greater must the pleasure have been!"

"Or the neck," said the trooper; but their desultory discourse was interrupted by their arrival at the cottage of Mr. Wharton. No one appearing to usher them into an apartment, the captain proceeded to the door of the parlor, where he knew visitors were commonly received. On opening it, he paused for a moment, in admiration at the scene within. The person of Colonel Wellmere first met his eye, bending towards the figure of the blushing Sarah, with an earnestness of manner that prevented the noise of Lawton's entrance from being heard by either of the parties. Certain significant signs, which were embraced at a glance by the prying gaze of the trooper, at once made him a master of their secret; and he was about to retire as silently as he had advanced, when his companion, pushing himself through the passage, abruptly entered the room. Advancing instantly to the chair of Wellmere, the surgeon instinctively laid hold of his arm, and exclaimed, —

"Bless me! — a quick and irregular pulse — flushed cheek and fiery eye — strong febrile symptoms, and such as must be attended to." While speaking, the doctor, who

was much addicted to practicing in a summary way, — a weakness of most medical men in military practice, — had already produced his lancet, and was making certain other indications of his intentions to proceed at once to business. But Colonel Wellmere, recovering from the confusion of the surprise, arose from his seat haughtily, and said, —

"Sir, it is the warmth of the room that lends me the color, and I am already too much indebted to your skill to give you any further trouble; Miss Wharton knows that I am quite well, and I do assure you that I never felt better or happier in my life."

There was a peculiar emphasis on the latter part of this speech, that, however it might gratify the feelings of Sarah, brought the color to her cheeks again; and Sitgreaves, as his eye followed the direction of those of his patient, did not fail to observe it.

"Your arm, if you please, madam," said the surgeon, advancing with a bow; "anxiety and watching have done their work on your delicate frame, and there are symptoms about you that must not be neglected."

"Excuse me, sir," said Sarah, recovering herself with womanly pride; "the heat is oppressive, and I will retire and acquaint Miss Peyton with your presence."

There was but little difficulty in practicing on the abstracted simplicity of the surgeon; but it was necessary for Sarah to raise her eyes to return the salutation of Lawton, as he bowed his head nearly to a level with the hand that held open the door for her passage. One look was sufficient; she was able to control her steps sufficiently to retire with dignity; but no sooner was she relieved from the presence of all observers, than she fell into a chair and abandoned herself to a feeling of mingled shame and pleasure.

A little nettled at the contumacious deportment of the British colonel, Sitgreaves, after once more tendering services that were again rejected, withdrew to the chamber of young Singleton, whither Lawton had already preceded him.

CHAPTER XXI.

Oh! Henry, when thou deign'st to sue,
Can I thy suit withstand?
When thou, loved youth, hast won my heart,
Can I refuse my hand?

HERMIT OF WARKWORTH.

THE graduate of Edinburgh found his patient rapidly improving in health, and entirely free from fever. His sister, with a cheek that was, if possible, paler than on her arrival, watched around his couch with tender care; and the ladies of the cottage had not, in the midst of their sorrows and varied emotions, forgotten to discharge the duties of hospitality. Frances felt herself impelled towards their disconsolate guest, with an interest for which she could not account, and with a force that she could not control. She had unconsciously connected the fates of Dunwoodie and Isabella in her imagination, and she felt, with the romantic ardor of a generous mind, that she was serving her former lover most, by exhibiting kindness to her he loved best. Isabella received her attentions with gratitude, but neither of them indulged in any allusions to the latent source of their uneasiness. The observation of Miss Peyton seldom penetrated beyond things that were visible, and to her the situation of Henry Wharton seemed to furnish an awful excuse for the fading cheeks and tearful eyes of her niece. If Sarah manifested less of care than her sister, still the unpracticed aunt was not at a loss to comprehend the reason. Love is a holy feeling with the virtuous of the female sex, and it hallows all that come within its influence. Although Miss Peyton mourned with sincerity over the danger which threatened her nephew, she well knew that an active campaign was not favorable to love, and the moments that were thus accidentally granted were not to be thrown away.

Several days now passed without any interruption of the usual avocations of the inhabitants of the cottage, or the party at the Four Corners. The former were supporting their fortitude with the certainty of Henry's innocence, and a strong reliance on Dunwoodie's exertions in his behalf, and the latter waiting with impatience the intelligence, that was hourly expected, of a conflict, and their orders to depart. Captain Lawton, however, waited for both these events in vain. Letters from the major announced that the enemy, finding that the party which was to coöperate with them had been defeated, and was withdrawn, had retired also behind the works of Fort Washington, where they continued inactive, threatening constantly to strike a blow in revenge for their disgrace. The trooper was enjoined to vigilance, and the letter concluded with a compliment to his honor, zeal, and undoubted bravery.

"Extremely flattering, Major Dunwoodie," muttered the dragoon, as he threw down this epistle, and stalked across the floor to quiet his impatience. "A proper guard have you selected for this service: let me see — I have to watch over the interests of a crazy, irresolute old man, who does not know whether he belongs to us or to the enemy; four women, three of whom are well enough in themselves, but who are not immensely flattered by my society; and the fourth, who, good as she is, is on the wrong side of forty; some two or three blacks; a talkative housekeeper, that does nothing but chatter about gold and despisables, and signs and omens; and poor George Singleton. Well, a comrade in suffering has a claim on a man, — so I'll make the best of it."

As he concluded this soliloquy, the trooper took a seat and began to whistle, to convince himself how little he cared about the matter, when, by throwing his booted leg carelessly round, he upset the canteen that held his whole stock of brandy. The accident was soon repaired, but in replacing the wooden vessel, he observed a billet lying on the bench, on which the liquor had been placed. It was soon opened, and he read, "The moon will not rise till after midnight — a fit time for deeds of darkness." There was no

mistaking the hand; it was clearly the same that had given him the timely warning against assassination, and the trooper continued, for a long time, musing on the nature of these two notices, and the motives that could induce the pedler to favor an implacable enemy in the manner that he had latterly done. That he was a spy of the enemy, Lawton knew; for the fact of his conveying intelligence to the English commander-in-chief, of a party of Americans that were exposed to the enemy, was proved most clearly against him on the trial for his life. The consequences of his treason had been avoided, it is true, by a lucky order from Washington, which withdrew the regiment a short time before the British appeared to cut it off, but still the crime was the same. "Perhaps," thought the partisan, "he wishes to make a friend of me against the event of another capture; but, at all events, he spared my life on one occasion, and saved it on another. I will endeavor to be as generous as himself, and pray that my duty may never interfere with my feelings."

Whether the danger, intimated in the present note, threatened the cottage or his own party, the captain was uncertain, but he inclined to the latter opinion, and determined to beware how he rode abroad in the dark. To a man in a peaceable country, and in times of quiet and order, the indifference with which the partisan regarded the impending danger would be inconceivable. His reflections on the subject were more directed towards devising means to entrap his enemies, than to escape their machinations. But the arrival of the surgeon, who had been to pay his daily visit to the Locusts, interrupted his meditations. Sitgreaves brought an invitation from the mistress of the mansion to Captain Lawton, desiring that the cottage might be honored with his presence at an early hour on that evening.

"Ha!" cried the trooper; "then they have received a letter also."

"I think nothing more probable," said the surgeon; "there is a chaplain at the cottage from the royal army, who has come out to exchange the British wounded, and who has an order from Colonel Singleton for their delivery. But a

more mad project than to remove them now was never adopted."

"A priest, say you! — is he a hard drinker — a real camp-idler — a fellow to breed a famine in a regiment? or does he seem a man who is in earnest in his trade?"

"A very respectable and orderly gentleman, and not unreasonably given to intemperance, judging from the outward symptoms," returned the surgeon; "and a man who really says grace in a very regular and appropriate manner."

"And does he stay the night?"

"Certainly, he waits for his cartel; but hasten, John, we have but little time to waste. I will just step up and bleed two or three of the Englishmen who are to move in the morning, in order to anticipate inflammation, and be with you immediately."

The gala suit of Captain Lawton was easily adjusted to his huge frame, and his companion being ready, they once more took their route towards the cottage. Roanoke had been as much benefited by a few days' rest as his master; and Lawton ardently wished, as he curbed his gallant steed, on passing the well-remembered rocks, that his treacherous enemy stood before him, mounted and armed as himself. But no enemy, nor any disturbance whatever, interfered with their progress, and they reached the Locusts just as the sun was throwing his setting rays on the valley, and tingeing the tops of the leafless trees with gold. It never required more than a single look to acquaint the trooper with the particulars of every scene that was not uncommonly veiled, and the first survey that he took on entering the house, told him more than the observations of a day had put into the possession of Dr. Sitgreaves. Miss Peyton accosted him with a smiling welcome, that exceeded the bounds of ordinary courtesy, and which evidently flowed more from feelings that were connected with the heart, than from manner. Frances glided about, tearful and agitated, while Mr. Wharton stood ready to receive them, decked in a suit of velvet that would have been conspicuous in the gayest drawing-room. Colonel Wellmere was in the uni

form of an officer of the household troops of his prince, and Isabella Singleton sat in the parlor, clad in the habiliments of joy, but with a countenance that belied her appearance; while her brother by her side looked, with a cheek of flitting color, and an eye of intense interest, like anything but an invalid. As it was the third day that he had left his room, Dr. Sitgreaves, who began to stare about him in stupid wonder, forgot to reprove his patient for imprudence. Into this scene Captain Lawton moved with all the composure and gravity of a man whose nerves were not easily discomposed by novelties. His compliments were received as graciously as they were offered, and after exchanging a few words with the different individuals present, he approached the surgeon, who had withdrawn, in a kind of confused astonishment, to rally his senses.

"John," whispered the surgeon, with awakened curiosity, "what means this festival?"

"That your wig and my black head would look the better for a little of Betty Flanagan's flour; but it is too late now, and we must fight the battle armed as you see."

"Observe, here comes the army chaplain in his full robes, as a Doctor Divinitatis; what can it mean?"

"An exchange," said the trooper; "the wounded of Cupid are to meet and settle their accounts with the god, in the way of plighting faith to suffer from his archery no more."

The surgeon laid a finger on the side of his nose, and he began to comprehend the case.

"Is it not a crying shame, that a sunshine-hero, and an enemy, should thus be suffered to steal away one of the fairest plants that grows in our soil," muttered Lawton; "a flower fit to be placed in the bosom of any man!"

"If he be not more accommodating as a husband than as a patient, John, I fear me that the lady will lead a troubled life."

"Let her," said the trooper, indignantly; "she has chosen from her country's enemies, and may she meet with a foreigner's virtues in her choice."

Further conversation was interrupted by Miss Peyton,

who, advancing, acquainted them that they had been invited to grace the nuptials of her eldest niece and Colonel Wellmere. The gentlemen bowed; and the good aunt, with an inherent love of propriety, went on to add, that the acquaintance was of an old date, and the attachment by no means a sudden thing. To this Lawton merely bowed still more ceremoniously; but the surgeon, who loved to hold converse with the virgin, replied, —

"That the human mind was differently constituted in different individuals. In some, impressions are vivid and transitory; in others, more deep and lasting: indeed, there are some philosophers who pretend to trace a connection between the physical and mental powers of the animal; but, for my part, madam, I believe that the one is much influenced by habit and association, and the other subject altogether to the peculiar laws of matter."

Miss Peyton, in her turn, bowed her silent assent to this remark, and retired with dignity, to usher the intended bride into the presence of the company. The hour had arrived when American custom has decreed that the vows of wedlock must be exchanged; and Sarah, blushing with a variety of emotions, followed her aunt to the drawing-room. Wellmere sprang to receive the hand that, with an averted face, she extended towards him, and, for the first time, the English colonel appeared fully conscious of the important part that he was to act in the approaching ceremony. Hitherto his air had been abstracted, and his manner uneasy; but everything, excepting the certainty of his bliss, seemed to vanish at the blaze of loveliness that now burst on his sight. All arose from their seats, and the reverend gentleman had already opened the sacred volume, when the absence of Frances was noticed: Miss Peyton withdrew in search of her youngest niece, whom she found in her own apartment, and in tears.

"Come, my love, the ceremony waits but for us," said the aunt, affectionately entwining her arm in that of her niece; "endeavor to compose yourself, that proper honor may be done to the choice of your sister."

"Is he — can he be, worthy of her?"

"Can he be otherwise?" returned Miss Peyton; "is he not a gentleman? — a gallant soldier, though an unfortunate one? and certainly, my love, one who appears every way qualified to make any woman happy."

Frances had given vent to her feelings, and, with an effort, she collected sufficient resolution to venture to join the party below. But to relieve the embarrassment of this delay, the clergyman had put sundry questions to the bridegroom; one of which was by no means answered to his satisfaction. Wellmere was compelled to acknowledge that he was unprovided with a ring; and to perform the marriage ceremony without one, the divine pronounced to be canonically impossible. His appeal to Mr. Wharton, for the propriety of this decision, was answered affirmatively, as it would have been negatively, had the question been put in a manner to lead to such a result. The owner of the Locusts had lost the little energy he possessed, by the blow recently received through his son, and his assent to the objection of the clergyman was as easily obtained as had been his consent to the premature proposals of Wellmere. In this stage of the dilemma, Miss Peyton and Frances appeared. The surgeon of dragoons approached the former, and as he handed her to a chair, observed, —

"It appears, madam, that untoward circumstances have prevented Colonel Wellmere from providing all of the decorations that custom, antiquity, and the canons of the church have prescribed as indispensable to enter into the honorable state of wedlock."

Miss Peyton glanced her quiet eye at the uneasy bridegroom, and perceiving him to be adorned with what she thought sufficient splendor, allowing for the time and the suddenness of the occasion, she turned her look on the speaker, as if to demand an explanation.

The surgeon understood her wishes, and proceeded at once to gratify them.

"There is," he observed, "an opinion prevalent, that the heart lies on the left side of the body, and that the connection between the members of that side and what

may be called the seat of life, is more intimate than that which exists with their opposites. But this is an error that grows out of an ignorance of the organic arrangement of the human frame. In obedience to this opinion, the fourth finger of the left hand is thought to contain a virtue that belongs to no other branch of that digitated member; and it is ordinarily encircled, during the solemnization of wedlock, with a cincture or ring, as if to chain that affection to the marriage state, which is best secured by the graces of the female character." While speaking, the operator laid his hand expressively on his heart, and he bowed nearly to the floor when he had concluded.

"I know not, sir, that I rightly understand your meaning," said Miss Peyton, whose want of comprehension was sufficiently excusable.

"A ring, madam — a ring is wanting for the ceremony."

The instant that the surgeon spoke explicitly, the awkwardness of the situation was understood. She glanced her eyes at her nieces, and in the younger she read a secret exultation that somewhat displeased her; but the countenance of Sarah was suffused with a shame that the considerate aunt well understood. Not for the world would she violate any of the observances of female etiquette. It suggested itself to all the females, at the same moment, that the wedding-ring of the late mother and sister was reposing peacefully amid the rest of her jewelry, in a secret receptacle, that had been provided at an early day, to secure the valuables against the predatory inroads of the marauders who roamed through the county. Into this hidden vault, the plate, and whatever was most prized, made a nightly retreat, and there the ring in question had long lain, forgotten until at this moment. But it was the business of the bridegroom, from time immemorial, to furnish this indispensable to wedlock, and on no account would Miss Peyton do anything that transcended the usual reserve of the sex on this solemn occasion; certainly not until sufficient expiation for the offense had

been made, by a due portion of trouble and disquiet. This material fact, therefore, was not disclosed by either; the aunt consulting female propriety; the bride yielding to shame; and Frances rejoicing that an embarrassment, proceeding from almost any cause, should delay her sister's vow. It was reserved for Dr. Sitgreaves to interrupt the awkward silence.

"If, madam, a plain ring, that once belonged to a sister of my own" — He paused, and hemmed — "If, madam, a ring of that description might be admitted to this honor, I have one that could be easily produced from my quarters at the Corners, and I doubt not it would fit the finger for which it is desired. There is a strong resemblance between — hem — between my late sister and Miss Wharton, in stature and anatomical figure: and, in all eligible subjects, the proportions are apt to be observed throughout the whole animal economy."

A glance of Miss Peyton's eye recalled Colonel Wellmere to a sense of his duty, and springing from his chair, he assured the surgeon, that in no way could he confer a greater obligation on himself than by sending for that very ring. The operator bowed a little haughtily, and withdrew to fulfill his promise, by dispatching a messenger on the errand. The aunt suffered him to retire; but unwillingness to admit a stranger into the privacy of their domestic arrangements, induced her to follow and tender the services of Cæsar, instead of those of Sitgreaves' man, who had volunteered for this duty. Katy Haynes was accordingly directed to summon the black to the vacant parlor, and thither Miss Peyton and the surgeon repaired, to give their several instructions.

The consent to this sudden union of Sarah and Wellmere, and especially at a time when the life of a member of the family was in such imminent jeopardy, was given from a conviction that the unsettled state of the country would probably prevent another opportunity to the lovers of meeting, and a secret dread on the part of Mr. Wharton, that the death of his son might, by hastening his own, leave his remaining children without a protector

But notwithstanding Miss Peyton had complied with her brother's wish to profit by the accidental visit of a divine, she had not thought it necessary to blazon the intended nuptials of her niece to the neighborhood, had even time been allowed: she thought, therefore, that she was now communicating a profound secret to the negro and her housekeeper.

"Cæsar," she commenced, with a smile, "you are now to learn that your young mistress, Miss Sarah, is to be united to Colonel Wellmere this evening."

"I t'ink I see him afore," said Cæsar, chuckling; "old black man can tell when a young lady make up he mind."

"Really, Cæsar, I find I have never given you credit for half the observation that you deserve; but as you already know on what emergency your services are required, listen to the directions of this gentleman, and take care to observe them strictly."

The black turned in quiet submission to the surgeon, who commenced as follows: —

"Cæsar, your mistress has already acquainted you with the important event about to be solemnized within this habitation; but a cincture or ring is wanting to encircle the finger of the bride; a custom derived from the ancients, and which has been continued in the marriage forms of several branches of the Christian church, and which is even, by a species of typical wedlock, used in the installation of prelates, as you doubtless understand.'

"Pr'aps Massa Doctor will say him over ag'in," interrupted the old negro, whose memory began to fail him, just as the other made so confident an allusion to his powers of comprehension; "I t'ink I get him by heart dis time."

"It is impossible to gather honey from a rock, Cæsar and therefore I will abridge the little I have to say. Ride to the Four Corners, and present this note to Sergeant Hollister, or to Mrs. Elizabeth Flanagan, either of whom will furnish the necessary pledge of connubial affection; and return forthwith."

The letter which the surgeon put into the hands of his

messenger, as he ceased, was conceived in the following terms: —

"If the fever has left Kinder, give him nourishment. Take three ounces more of blood from Watson. Have a search made that the woman Flanagan has left none of her jugs of alcohol in the hospital. Renew the dressings of Johnson, and dismiss Smith to duty. Send the ring, which is pendent from the chain of the watch, that I left with you to time the doses, by the bearer.

"ARCHIBALD SITGREAVES, M. D.,
"*Surgeon of Dragoons.*"

"Cæsar," said Katy, when she was alone with the black, "put the ring, when you get it, in your left pocket, for that is nearest your heart; and by no means endeavor to try it on your finger, for it is unlucky."

"Try um on he finger?" interrupted the negro, stretching forth his bony knuckles; "t'ink a Miss Sally's ring go on old Cæsar finger?"

"'Tis not consequential whether it goes on or not," said the housekeeper; "but it is an evil omen to place a marriage-ring on the finger of another after wedlock, and of course it may be dangerous before."

"I tell you, Katy, I neber t'ink to put um on a finger."

"Go then, Cæsar, and do not forget the left pocket; be careful to take off your hat as you pass the graveyard, and be expeditious; for nothing, I am certain, can be more trying to the patience, than thus to be waiting for the ceremony, when a body has fully made up her mind to marry."

With this injunction Cæsar quitted the house, and he was soon firmly fixed in the saddle. From his youth, the black, like all of his race, had been a hard rider; but, bending under the weight of sixty winters, his African blood had lost some of its native heat. The night was dark, and the wind whistled through the vale with the dreariness of November. When Cæsar reached the graveyard, he uncovered his grizzled head with superstitious

awe, and threw around him many a fearful glance, in momentary expectation of seeing something superhuman. There was sufficient light to discern a being of earthly mould stealing from among the graves, apparently with a design to enter the highway. It is in vain that philosophy and reason contend with early impressions, and poor Cæsar was even without the support of either of these frail allies. He was, however, well mounted on a coach-horse of Mr. Wharton's, and, clinging to the back of the animal with instinctive skill, he abandoned the rein to the beast. Hillocks, woods, rocks, fences, and houses flew by him with the rapidity of lightning, and the black had just begun to think whither and on what business he was riding in this headlong manner, when he reached the place where the roads met, and the "Hotel Flanagan" stood before him in its dilapidated simplicity. The sight of a cheerful fire first told the negro that he had reached the habitation of man, and with it came all his dread of the bloody Virginians; his duty must, however, be done, and, dismounting, he fastened the foaming animal to a fence, and approached the window with cautious steps, to reconnoitre.

Before a blazing fire sat Sergeant Hollister and Betty Flanagan, enjoying themselves over a liberal potation.

"I tell ye, sargeant dear," said Betty, removing the mug from her mouth, "'tis no r'asonable to think it was more than the pidler himself; sure now, where was the smell of sulphur, and the wings, and the tail, and the cloven foot? — besides, sargeant, it's no dacent to tell a lone famale that she had Beelzeboob for a bedfellow."

"It matters but little, Mrs. Flanagan, provided you escape his talons and fangs hereafter," returned the veteran, following the remark by a heavy draught.

Cæsar heard enough to convince him that little danger from this pair was to be apprehended. His teeth already began to chatter, and the cold without and the comfort within stimulated him greatly to enter. He made his approaches with proper caution, and knocked with extreme humility. The appearance of Hollister with a drawn sword, roughly demanding who was without, contributed

in no degree to the restoration of his faculties; but fear itself lent him power to explain his errand.

"Advance," said the sergeant, throwing a look of close scrutiny on the black, as he brought him to the light; "advance, and deliver your despatches: have you the countersign?"

"I don't t'ink he know what dat be," said the black, shaking in his shoes, "dough massa dat sent me gib me many t'ings to carry, dat he little understand."

"Who ordered you on this duty, did you say?"

"Well, it war he doctor, heself, so he come up on a gallop, as he alway do on a doctor's errand."

"'Twas Doctor Sitgreaves; he never knows the countersign himself. Now, blackey, had it been Captain Lawton, he would not have sent you here, close to a sentinel, without the countersign; for you might get a pistol bullet through your head, and that would be cruel to you; for although you be black, I am none of them who thinks niggers have no souls."

"Sure a nagur has as much sowl as a white," said Betty: "come hither, ould man, and warm that shivering carcase of yeers by the blaze of this fire. I'm sure a Guinea nagur loves hate as much as a souldier loves his drop."

Cæsar obeyed in silence, and a mulatto boy who was sleeping on a bench in the room, was bidden to convey the note of the surgeon to the building where the wounded were quartered.

"Here," said the washerwoman, tendering to Cæsar a taste of the article that most delighted herself, "try a drop, smooty, 'twill warm the black sowl within your crazy body, and be giving you spirits as you are going homeward."

"I tell you, Elizabeth," said the sergeant, "that the souls of niggers are the same as our own; how often have I heard the good Mr. Whitfield say that there was no distinction of color in heaven. Therefore it is reasonable to believe that the soul of this here black is as white as my own, or even Major Dunwoodie's."

"Be sure he be," cried Cæsar, a little tartly, whose courage had revived by tasting the drop of Mrs. Flanagan.

"It's a good sowl that the major is, any way," returned the washerwoman; "and a kind sowl — aye, and a brave sowl too; and ye'll say all that yeerself, sargeant, I'm thinking."

"For the matter of that," returned the veteran, "there is one above even Washington, to judge of souls; but this I will say, that Major Dunwoodie is a gentleman who never says, Go, boys — but always says, Come, boys; and if a poor fellow is in want of a spur or a martingale, and the leather-whack is gone, there is never wanting the real silver to make up the loss, and that from his own pocket too."

"Why, then, are you here idle when all that he holds most dear are in danger?" cried a voice with startling abruptness; "mount, mount, and follow your captain; arm and mount, and that instantly, or you will be too late!"

This unexpected interruption produced an instantaneous confusion amongst the tipplers. Cæsar fled instinctively into the fire-place, where he maintained his position in defiance of a heat that would have roasted a white man. Sergeant Hollister turned promptly on his heel, and seizing his sabre, the steel was glittering by the firelight, in the twinkling of an eye; but perceiving the intruder to be the pedler, who stood near the open door that led to the lean-to in the rear, he began to fall back towards the position of the black, with a military intuition that taught him to concentrate his forces. Betty alone stood her ground, by the side of the temporary table. Replenishing the mug with a large addition of the article known to the soldiery by the name of "choke-dog," she held it towards the pedler. The eyes of the washerwoman had for some time been swimming with love and liquor, and turning them good-naturedly on Birch, she cried, —

"Faith, but ye're wilcome, Mister Pidler, or Mister Birch, or Mister Beelzeboob, or what's yeer name. Ye're an honest divil any way, and I'm hoping that you found the pitticoats convanient. Come forward, dear, and fale

the fire ; Sargeant Hollister won't be hurting you, for the fear of an ill turn you may be doing him hereafter — will ye, sargeant dear ? "

" Depart, ungodly man ! " cried the veteran, edging still nearer to Cæsar, but lifting his legs alternately as they scorched with the heat, " depart in peace ! There is none here for thy service, and you seek the woman in vain. There is a tender mercy that will save her from thy talons." The sergeant ceased to utter aloud, but the motion of his lips continued, and a few scattering words of prayer were alone audible.

The brain of the washerwoman was in such a state of confusion that she did not clearly comprehend the meaning of her suitor, but a new idea struck her imagination, and she broke forth, —

" If it's me the man saaks, where's the matter, pray ? am I not a widowed body, and my own property ? And you talk of tinderness, sargeant ; but it's little I see of it, any way : who knows but Mr. Beelzeboob here is free to speak his mind ? I'm sure it is willing to hear I am."

" Woman," said the pedler, " be silent ; and you, foolish man, mount — arm and mount, and fly to the rescue of your officer, if you are worthy of the cause in which you serve, and would not disgrace the coat you wear." The pedler vanished from the sight of the bewildered trio, with a rapidity that left them uncertain whither he had fled.

On hearing the voice of an old friend, Cæsar emerged from his corner, and fearlessly advanced to the spot where Betty had resolutely maintained her ground, though in a state of utter mental confusion.

" I wish Harvey stop," said the black ; " if he ride down a road, I should like he company ; I don't t'ink Johuny Birch hurt he own son."

" Poor ignorant wretch ! " exclaimed the veteran, recovering his voice with a long-drawn breath ; " think you that figure was made of flesh and blood ? "

" Harvey ain't fleshy," replied the black, " but he berry clebber man."

" Pooh ! sargeant dear," exclaimed the washerwoman,

"talk r'ason for once, and mind what the knowing one tells ye; call out the boys, and ride a bit after Captain Jack; rimimber, darling, that he told ye, the day, to be in readiness to mount at a moment's warning."

"Aye, but not at a summons from the foul fiend. Let Captain Lawton, or Lieutenant Mason, or Cornet Skipwith, say the word, and who is quicker in the saddle than I?"

"Well, sargeant, how often is it that ye've boasted to myself that the corps wasn't a bit afeard to face the divil?"

"No more are we, in battle array, and by daylight; but it's foolhardy and irreverent to tempt Satan, and on such a night as this: listen how the wind whistles through the trees; and hark! there is the howling of evil spirits abroad."

"I see him," said Cæsar, opening his eyes to a width that might have embraced more than an ideal form.

"Where?" interrupted the sergeant, instinctively laying his hand on the hilt of his sabre.

"No, no," said the black, "I see a Johnny Birch come out of he grave — Johnny walk afore he buried."

"Ah! then he must have led an evil life indeed," said Hollister: "the blessed in spirit lie quiet until the general muster, but wickedness disturbs the soul in this life as well as in that which is to come."

"And what is to come of Captain Jack?" cried Betty, angrily; "is it yeer orders that ye won't mind, nor a warning given? I'll jist git my cart, and ride down and tell him that ye're afeard of a dead man and Beelzeboob; and it isn't succor he may be expicting from ye. I wonder who'll be the orderly of the troop the morrow, then? — his name won't be Hollister, any way."

"Nay, Betty, nay," said the sergeant, laying his hand familiarly on her shoulder; "if there must be riding tonight, let it be by him whose duty it is to call out the men and to set an example. The Lord have mercy, and send us enemies of flesh and blood!"

Another glass confirmed the veteran in a resolution that was only excited by a dread of his captain's displeasure, and he proceeded to summon the dozen men who had been

left under his command. The boy arriving with the ring, Cæsar placed it carefully in the pocket of his waistcoat next his heart, and, mounting, shut his eyes, seized his charger by the mane, and continued in a state of comparative insensibility, until the animal stopped at the door of the warm stable whence he had started.

The movements of the dragoons, being timed to the order of a march, were much slower, for they were made with a watchfulness that was intended to guard against surprise from the evil one himself.

CHAPTER XXII.

> Be not your tongue thy own shame's orator,
> Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty,
> Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger.
>
> COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THE situation of the party in Mr. Wharton's dwelling was sufficiently awkward, during the hour of Cæsar's absence; for such was the astonishing rapidity displayed by his courser, that the four miles of road was gone over, and the events we have recorded had occurred, somewhat within that period of time. Of course, the gentlemen strove to make the irksome moments fly as swiftly as possible; but premeditated happiness is certainly of the least joyous kind. The bride and bridegroom are immemorially privileged to be dull, and but few of their friends seemed disposed, on the present occasion, to dishonor their example. The English colonel exhibited a proper portion of uneasiness at this unexpected interruption of his felicity, and he sat with a varying countenance by the side of Sarah, who seemed to be profiting by the delay to gather fortitude for the solemn ceremony. In the midst of this embarrassing silence, Dr. Sitgreaves addressed himself to Miss Peyton, by whose side he had contrived to procure a chair.

"Marriage, madam, is pronounced to be honorable in the sight of God and man: and it may be said to be reduced, in the present age, to the laws of nature and reason. The ancients, in sanctioning polygamy, lost sight of the provisions of nature, and condemned thousands to misery but with the increase of science have grown the wise ordinances of society, which ordain that man should be the husband of but one woman."

Wellmere glanced a fierce expression of disgust at the

surgeon, that indicated his sense of the tediousness of the other's remarks; while Miss Peyton, with a slight hesitation, as if fearful of touching on forbidden subjects, replied, —

"I had thought, sir, that we were indebted to the Christian religion for our morals on this subject."

"True, madam, it is somewhere provided in the prescriptions of the apostles, that the sexes should henceforth be on an equality in this particular. But in what degree could polygamy affect holiness of life? It was probably a wise arrangement of Paul, who was much of a scholar, and probably had frequent conferences, on this important subject, with Luke, whom we all know to have been bred to the practice of medicine" —

There is no telling how far the discursive fancy of Sitgreaves might have led him, on this subject, had he not been interrupted. But Lawton, who had been a close though silent observer of all that passed, profited by the hint to ask abruptly, —

"Pray, Colonel Wellmere, in what manner is bigamy punished in England?"

The bridegroom started, and his lip blanched. Recovering himself, however, on the instant, he answered with a suavity that became so happy a man, —

"Death! — as such an offense merits," he said.

"Death and dissection," continued the operator: "it is seldom that the law loses sight of eventual utility in a malefactor. Bigamy, in a man, is a heinous offense!"

"More so than celibacy?" asked Lawton.

"More so," returned the surgeon, with undisturbed simplicity: "one who remains in a single state may devote his life to science and the extension of knowledge, if not of his species; but the wretch who profits by the constitutional tendency of the female sex to credulity and tenderness, incurs the wickedness of a positive sin, heightened by the baseness of deception."

"Really, sir, the ladies are infinitely obliged to you, for attributing folly to them as part of their nature."

"Captain Lawton, in man the animal is more nobly

formed than in woman. The nerves are endowed with less sensibility; the whole frame is less pliable and yielding; is it therefore surprising, that a tendency to rely on the faith of her partner is more natural to woman than to the other sex?"

Wellmere, as if unable to listen with any degree of patience to so ill-timed a dialogue, sprang from his seat and paced the floor in disorder. Pitying his situation, the reverend gentleman, who was patiently awaiting the return of Cæsar, changed the discourse, and a few minutes brought the black himself. The billet was handed to Dr. Sitgreaves; for Miss Peyton had expressly enjoined Cæsar not to implicate her, in any manner, in the errand on which he was dispatched. The note contained a summary statement of the several subjects of the surgeon's directions, and referred him to the black for the ring. The latter was instantly demanded, and promptly delivered. A transient look of melancholy clouded the brow of the surgeon, as he stood a moment, and gazed silently on the bauble; nor did he remember the place, or the occasion, while he soliloquized as follows: —

"Poor Anna! gay as innocence and youth could make thee was thy heart, when this cincture was formed to grace thy nuptials; but ere the hour had come, God had taken thee to Himself. Years have passed, my sister, but never have I forgotten the companion of my infancy!" He advanced to Sarah, and, unconscious of observation, placing the ring on her finger, continued, "She for whom it was intended has long been in her grave, and the youth who bestowed the gift soon followed her sainted spirit: take it, madam, and God grant that it may be an instrument in making you as happy as you deserve!"

Sarah felt a chill at her heart, as this burst of feeling escaped the surgeon; but Wellmere offering his hand, she was led before the divine, and the ceremony began. The first words of this imposing office produced a dead stillness in the apartment: and the minister of God proceeded to the solemn exhortation, and witnessed the plighted troth of the parties, when the investiture was to follow. The ring had

been left, from inadvertency, and the agitation of the moment, on the finger where Sitgreaves had placed it: the slight interruption occasioned by the circumstance was over, and the clergyman was about to proceed, when a figure gliding into the midst of the party, at once put a stop to the ceremony. It was the pedler. His look was bitter and ironical, while a finger, raised towards the divine, seemed to forbid the ceremony to go any further.

"Can Colonel Wellmere waste the precious moments here, when his wife has crossed the ocean to meet him? The nights are long, and the moon bright; a few hours will take him to the city."

Aghast at the suddenness of this extraordinary address, Wellmere for a moment lost the command of his faculties. To Sarah, the countenance of Birch, expressive as it was, produced no terror; but the instant she recovered from the surprise of his interruption, she turned her anxious gaze on the features of the man to whom she had just pledged her troth. They afforded the most terrible confirmation of all that the pedler affirmed; the room whirled round, and she fell lifeless into the arms of her aunt. There is an instinctive delicacy in woman, that seems to conquer all other emotions; and the insensible bride was immediately conveyed from sight, leaving the room to the sole possession of the other sex.

The confusion enabled the pedler to retreat with a rapidity that would have baffled pursuit, had any been attempted, and Wellmere stood with every eye fixed on him, in ominous silence.

"'Tis false — 'tis false as hell!" he cried, striking his forehead. "I have ever denied her claim; nor will the laws of my country compel me to acknowledge it."

"But what will conscience and the laws of God do?" asked Lawton.

"'Tis well, sir," said Wellmere, haughtily, and retreating towards the door, "my situation protects you now; but a time may come" —

He had reached the entry, when a slight tap on his shoulder caused him to turn his head; it was Captain

Lawton, who, with a smile of peculiar meaning, beckoned him to follow. The state of Wellmere's mind was such, that he would gladly have gone anywhere to avoid the gaze of horror and detestation that glared from every eye he met. They reached the stables before the trooper spoke, when he cried aloud,—

"Bring out Roanoke!"

His man appeared with the steed caparisoned for its master. Lawton, coolly throwing the bridle on the neck of the animal, took his pistols from the holsters, and continued, "Here are weapons that have seen good service before to-day — aye, and in honorable hands, sir. These were the pistols of my father, Colonel Wellmere; he used them with credit in the wars with France, and gave them to me to fight the battles of my country with. In what better way can I serve her than in exterminating a wretch who would have blasted one of her fairest daughters?"

"This injurious treatment shall meet with its reward," cried the other, seizing the offered weapon; "the blood lie on the head of him who sought it!"

"Amen! but hold a moment, sir. You are now free, and the passports of Washington are in your pocket; I give you the fire; if I fall, there is a steed that will outstrip pursuit; and I would advise you to retreat without much delay, for even Archibald Sitgreaves would fight in such a cause — nor will the guard above be very apt to give quarter."

"Are you ready?" asked Wellmere, gnashing his teeth with rage.

"Stand forward, Tom, with the lights; fire!"

Wellmere fired, and the bullion flew from the epaulette of the trooper.

"Now the turn is mine," said Lawton, deliberately leveling his pistol.

"And mine!" shouted a voice, as the weapon was struck from his hand. "By all the devils in hell, 'tis the mad Virginian! — fall on, my boys, and take him; this is a prize not hoped for!"

Unarmed, and surprised as he was, Lawton's presence of

mind did not desert him; he felt that he was in the hands of those from whom he was to expect no mercy; and, as four of the Skinners fell upon him at once, he used his gigantic strength to the utmost. Three of the band grasped him by the neck and arms, with an intent to clog his efforts, and pinion him with ropes. The first of these he threw from him, with a violence that sent him against the building, where he lay stunned with the blow. But the fourth seized his legs; and, unable to contend with such odds, the trooper came to the earth, bringing with him all of his assailants. The struggle on the ground was short but terrific; curses and the most dreadful imprecations were uttered by the Skinners, who in vain called on more of their band, who were gazing on the combat in nerveless horror, to assist. A difficulty of breathing, from one of the combatants, was heard, accompanied by the stifled moanings of a strangled man; and directly one of the group arose on his feet, shaking himself free from the wild grasp of the others. Both Wellmere and the servant of Lawton had fled: the former to the stables, and the latter to give the alarm, leaving all in darkness. The figure that stood erect sprang into the saddle of the unheeded charger; sparks of fire, issuing from the armed feet of the horse, gave a momentary light by which the captain was seen dashing like the wind towards the highway.

"By hell, he's off!" cried the leader, hoarse with rage and exhaustion; "fire! — bring him down — fire, or you'll be too late."

The order was obeyed, and one moment of suspense followed, in the vain hope of hearing the huge frame of Lawton tumbling from his steed.

"He would not fall if you had killed him," muttered one; "I've known these Virginians sit their horses with two or three balls through them; aye, even after they were dead."

A freshening of the wind wafted the tread of a horse down the valley, which, by its speed, gave assurance of a rider governing its motion.

"These trained horses always stop when the rider falls," observed one of the gang.

"Then," cried the leader, striking his musket on the ground in a rage, "the fellow is safe! — to your business at once. A short half-hour will bring down that canting sergeant and the guard upon us. 'Twill be lucky if the guns don't turn them out. Quick, to your posts, and fire the house in the chambers; smoking ruins are good to cover evil deeds."

"What is to be done with this lump of earth?" cried another, pushing the body that yet lay insensible, where it had been hurled by the arm of Lawton; "a little rubbing would bring him to."

"Let him lie," said the leader, fiercely; "had he been half a man, that dragooning rascal would have been in my power; enter the house, I say, and fire the chambers. We can't go amiss here; there is plate and money enough to make you all gentlemen — and revenge too."

The idea of silver in any way was not to be resisted; and, leaving their companion, who began to show faint signs of life, they rushed tumultuously towards the dwelling. Wellmere availed himself of the opportunity, and, stealing from the stable with his own charger, he was able to gain the highway unnoticed. For an instant he hesitated, whether to ride towards the point where he knew the guard was stationed, and endeavor to rescue the family, or, profiting by his liberty, and the exchange that had been effected by the divine, to seek the royal army. Shame, and a consciousness of guilt, determined him to take the latter course, and he rode towards New York, stung with the reflection of his own baseness, and harassed with the apprehension of meeting with an enraged woman, that he had married during his late visit to England, but whose claims, as soon as his passion was sated, he had resolved never willingly to admit. In the tumult and agitation of the moment, the retreat of Lawton and Wellmere was but little noticed; the condition of Mr. Wharton demanding the care and consolation of both the surgeon and the divine. The report of the fire-arms first roused the family to the sense of a new danger, and but a moment elapsed before the leader, and one more of the gang, entered the room.

"Surrender! you servants of King George," shouted the leader, presenting his musket to the breast of Sitgreaves, "or I will let a little tory blood from your veins."

"Gently — gently, my friend," said the surgeon; "you are doubtless more expert in inflicting wounds than in healing them; the weapon that you hold so indiscreetly is extremely dangerous to animal life."

"Yield, or take its contents."

"Why and wherefore should I yield? — I am a non-combatant. The articles of capitulation must be arranged with Captain John Lawton; though yielding, I believe, is not a subject on which you will find him particularly complying."

The fellow had by this time taken such a survey of the group, as convinced him that little danger was to be apprehended from resistance, and, eager to seize his share of the plunder, he dropped his musket, and was soon busy with the assistance of his men, in arranging divers articles of plate in bags. The cottage now presented a singular spectacle. The ladies were gathered around Sarah, who yet continued insensible, in one of the rooms that had escaped the notice of the marauders. Mr. Wharton sat in a state of perfect imbecility, listening to, but not profiting by, the unmeaning words of comfort that fell from the lips of the clergyman. Singleton was lying on a sofa, shaking with debility, and inattentive to surrounding objects; while the surgeon was administering restoratives, and looking at the dressings, with a coolness that mocked the tumult. Cæsar, and the attendant of Captain Singleton, had retreated to the wood in the rear of the cottage, and Katy Haynes was flying about the building, busily employed in forming a bundle of valuables, from which, with the most scrupulous honesty, she rejected every article that was not really and truly her own.

But to return to the party at the Four Corners. When the veteran had got his men mounted and under arms, a restless desire to participate in the glory and dangers of the expedition came over the washerwoman. Whether she was impelled to the undertaking by a dread of remaining alone,

or a wish to hasten in person to the relief of her favorite, we will not venture to assert; but, as Hollister was giving the orders to wheel and march, the voice of Betty was heard, exclaiming, —

"Stop a bit, sargeant dear, till two of the boys git out the cart, and I'll jist ride wid ye; 'tis like there'll be wounded, and it will be mighty convanient to bring them home in."

Although inwardly much pleased with any cause of delay to a service that he so little relished, Hollister affected some displeasure at the detention.

"Nothing but a cannon-ball can take one of my lads from his charger," he said; "and it's not very likely that we shall have as fair fighting as cannon and musketry, in a business of the evil one's inventing; so, Elizabeth, you may go if you will, but the cart will not be wanting."

"Now, sargeant dear, you lie, any way," said Betty, who was somewhat unduly governed by her potations; "and wasn't Captain Singleton shot off his horse but tin days gone by? aye, and Captain Jack himself too; and didn't he lie on the ground, face uppermost, and back downwards, looking grim? and didn't the boys t'ink him dead, and turn and l'ave the rig'lars the day?"

"You lie back again," cried the sergeant, fiercely: "and so does any one who says that we didn't gain the day."

"For a bit or so — only I mane for a bit or so," said the washerwoman; "but Major Dunwoodie turned you, and so you licked the rig'lars. But the captain it was that fell, and I'm thinking that there's no better rider going; so, sargeant, it's the cart will be convanient. Here, two of you, jist hitch the mare to the tills, and it's no whiskey that ye'll be wanting the morrow; and put the piece of Jenny's hide under the pad; the baste is never the better for the rough ways of the county West-Chester." The consent of the sergeant being obtained, the equipage of Mrs. Flanagan was soon in readiness to receive its burthen.

"As it is quite uncertain whether we shall be attacked in front, or in rear," said Hollister, "five of you shall march in advance, and the remainder shall cover our retreat towards

the barrack, should we be pressed. 'Tis an awful moment to a man of little learning, Elizabeth, to command in such a service; for my part, I wish devoutly that one of the officers were here; but my trust is in the Lord."

"Pooh! man, away wid ye," said the washerwoman, who had got herself comfortably seated; "the divil a bit of an inimy is there near. March on, hurry-skurry, and let the mare trot, or it's but little that Captain Jack will thank ye for the help."

"Although unlearned in matters of communicating with spirits, or laying the dead, Mrs. Flanagan," said the veteran, "I have not served through the old war, and five years in this, not to know how to guard the baggage. Doesn't Washington always cover the baggage? I am not to be told my duty by a camp follower. Fall in as you are ordered, and dress, men."

"Well, march, any way," cried the impatient washerwoman; "the black is there already, and it's tardy the captain will think ye."

"Are you sure that it was really a black man that brought the order?" said the sergeant, dropping in between the platoons, where he could converse with Betty, and be at hand, to lead on an emergency, either on an advance or on a retreat.

"Nay — and I'm sure of nothing, dear. But why don't the boys prick their horses and jog a trot? the mare is mighty un'asy, and it's no warm in this cursed valley, riding as much like a funeral party as old rags is to continental." [1]

"Fairly and softly, aye, and prudently, Mrs. Flanagan; it's not rashness that makes the good officer. If we have to encounter a spirit, it's more than likely he'll make his attack by surprise; horses are not very powerful in the dark, and I have a character to lose, good woman."

"Caractur! and isn't it caractur and life too that Captain Jack has to lose?"

[1] The paper money issued by congress was familiarly called continental money. This term "continental" was applied to the army, the congress, the ships of war, and, in short, to almost every thing or interest which belonged to the new government. It would seem to have been invented as the opposite of the insular position of the mother country.

"Halt!" cried the sergeant; "what is that lurking near the foot of the rock, on the left?"

"Sure, it's nothing, unless it be matter of Captain Jack's sowl that's come to haunt ye, for not being brisker on the march."

"Betty, your levity makes you an unfit comrade for such an expedition. Advance, one of you, and reconnoitre the spot; draw swords! — rear rank, close to the front!"

"Pshaw!" shouted Betty, "is it a big fool or a big coward that ye are? jist wheel from the road, boys, and I'll shove the mare down upon it in the twinkling of an eye — and it's no ghost that I fear."

By this time one of the men had returned, and declared there was nothing to prevent their advancing, and the party continued their march, but with great deliberation and caution.

"Courage and prudence are the jewels of a soldier, Mrs. Flanagan," said the sergeant: "without the one, the other may be said to be good for nothing."

"Prudence without courage: is it *that* you mane? — and it's so that I'm thinking myself, sargeant. This baste pulls tight on the reins, any way."

"Be patient, good woman; hark! what is that?" said Hollister, pricking up his ears at the report of Wellmere's pistol; "I'll swear that was a human pistol, and one from our regiment. Rear rank, close to the front! — Mrs. Flanagan, I must leave you." So saying, having recovered all his faculties, by hearing a sound that he understood, he placed himself at the head of his men with an air of military pride, that the darkness prevented the washerwoman from beholding. A volley of musketry now rattled in the night wind, and the sergeant exclaimed, —

"March! — quick time!"

The next instant the trampling of a horse was heard coming up the road, at a rate that announced a matter of life or death; and Hollister again halted his party, riding a short distance in front himself, to meet the rider.

"Stand! — who goes there?" shouted Hollister.

"Ha! Hollister, is it you?" cried Lawton, "ever ready, and at your post: but where is the guard?"

"At hand, sir, and ready to follow you through thick and thin," said the veteran, relieved at once from responsibility, and as eager as a boy to be led against his enemy.

"'Tis well!" said the trooper, riding up to his men; then, speaking a few words of encouragement, he led them down the valley at a rate but little less rapid than his approach. The miserable horse of the sutler was soon distanced, and Betty, thus thrown out in the chase, turned to the side of the road, and observed, —

"There — it's no difficult to tell that Captain Jack is wid 'em, any way; and away they go like so many nagur boys to a husking-frolic; well, I'll jist hitch the mare to this bit of a fence, and walk down and see the sport afoot — it's no r'asonable to expose the baste to be hurted."

Led on by Lawton, the men followed, destitute alike of fear and reflection. Whether it was a party of the refugees, or a detachment from the royal army, that they were to assail, they were profoundly ignorant; but they knew that the officer in advance was distinguished for courage and personal prowess; and these are virtues that are sure to captivate the thoughtless soldiery. On arriving near the gates of the Locusts, the trooper halted his party, and made his arrangements for the assault. Dismounting, he ordered eight of his men to follow his example, and turning to Hollister, said, —

"Stand you here, and guard the horses; if anything attempt to pass, stop it, or cut it down, and" — The flames at this moment burst through the dormer-windows and cedar roof of the cottage, and a bright light glared on the darkness of the night. "On!" shouted the trooper, "on! — give quarter when you have done justice!"

There was a startling fierceness in the voice of the trooper that reached to the heart, even amid the horrors of the cottage. The leader of the Skinners dropped his plunder, and, for a moment, he stood in nerveless dread; then rushing to a window, he threw up the sash; at this instant Lawton entered, sabre in hand, into the apartment.

"Die, miscreant!" cried the trooper, cleaving a marauder to the jaw: but the leader sprang into the lawn, and es-

caped his vengeance. The shrieks of the females restored Lawton to his presence of mind, and the earnest entreaty of the divine induced him to attend to the safety of the family. One more of the gang fell in with the dragoons, and met his death; but the remainder had taken the alarm in season. Occupied with Sarah, neither Miss Singleton, nor the ladies of the house, had discovered the entrance of the Skinners, though the flames were raging around them with a fury that threatened the building with rapid destruction. The shrieks of Katy and the terrified consort of Cæsar, together with the noise and uproar in the adjacent apartment, first roused Miss Peyton and Isabella to a sense of their danger.

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed the alarmed aunt; "there is a dreadful confusion in the house, and there will be blood shed in consequence of this affair."

"There are none to fight," returned Isabella, with a face paler than that of the other; "Dr. Sitgreaves is very peaceable in his disposition, and surely Captain Lawton would not forget himself so far."

"The southern temper is quick and fiery," continued Miss Peyton; "and your brother, feeble and weak as he is, has looked the whole afternoon flushed and angry."

"Good Heaven!" cried Isabella, with difficulty supporting herself on the couch of Sarah; "he is gentle as the lamb by nature, though the lion is not his equal when roused."

"We must interfere: our presence will quell the tumult, and possibly save the life of a fellow-creature."

Miss Peyton, excited to attempt what she conceived a duty worthy of her sex and nature, advanced with the dignity of injured female feeling, to the door, followed by Isabella. The apartment to which Sarah had been conveyed was in one of the wings of the building, and it communicated with the principal hall of the cottage by a long and dark passage. This was now light, and across its termination several figures were seen rushing with an impetuosity that prevented an examination of their employment.

"Let us advance," said Miss Peyton, with a firmness her face belied; "they must respect our sex."

"They shall," cried Isabella, taking the lead in the enterprise. Frances was left alone with her sister. A few minutes were passed in silence; when a loud crash, in the upper apartments, was succeeded by a bright light that glared through the open door, and made objects as distinct to the eye as if they were placed under a noon-day sun. Sarah raised herself on her bed, and staring wildly around, pressed both her hands on her forehead, endeavoring to recollect herself.

"This, then, is heaven — and you are one of its bright spirits. Oh! how glorious is its radiance! I had thought the happiness I have lately experienced was too much for earth. But we shall meet again; yes — yes — we shall meet again."

"Sarah! Sarah!" cried Frances, in terror; "my sister — my only sister — Oh! do not smile so horridly: know me, or you will break my heart."

"Hush," said Sarah, raising her hand for silence; "you may disturb his rest — surely, he will follow me to the grave. Think you there can be two wives in the grave? No — no — no; one — one — one — only one."

Frances dropped her head into the lap of her sister, and wept in agony.

"Do you shed tears, sweet angel?" continued Sarah, soothingly; "then heaven is not exempt from grief. But where is Henry? He was executed, and he must be here too; perhaps they will come together. Oh, how joyful will be the meeting!"

Frances sprang on her feet, and paced the apartment. The eye of Sarah followed her in childish admiration of her beauty.

"You look like my sister; but all good and lovely spirits are alike. Tell me, were you ever married? Did you ever let a stranger steal your affections from father, and brother, and sister? If not, poor wretch, I pity you, although you may be in heaven."

"Sarah — peace, peace — I implore you to be silent,"

shrieked Frances, rushing to her bed, "or you will kill me at your feet."

Another dreadful crash shook the building to its centre. It was the falling of the roof, and the flames threw their light abroad, so as to make objects visible around the cottage, through the windows of the room. Frances flew to one of them, and saw the confused group that was collected on the lawn. Among them were her aunt and Isabella, pointing with distraction to the fiery edifice, and apparently urging the dragoons to enter it. For the first time she comprehended their danger; and uttering a wild shriek, she flew through the passage without consideration, or object.

A dense and suffocating column of smoke opposed her progress. She paused to breathe, when a man caught her in his arms, and bore her, in a state of insensibility, through the falling embers and darkness, to the open air. The instant that Frances recovered her recollection, she perceived that she owed her life to Lawton, and throwing herself on her knees, she cried —

"Sarah! Sarah! Sarah! save my sister, and may the blessing of God await you!"

Her strength failed, and she sunk on the grass, in insensibility. The trooper pointed to her figure, motioned to Katy for assistance, and advanced once more to the building. The fire had already communicated to the woodwork of the piazzas and windows, and the whole exterior of the cottage was covered with smoke. The only entrance was through these dangers, and even the hardy and impetuous Lawton paused to consider. It was for a moment only, when he dashed into the heat and darkness, where, missing the entrance, he wandered for a minute, and precipitated himself back, again, upon the lawn. Drawing a single breath of pure air, he renewed the effort, and was again unsuccessful. On a third trial, he met a man staggering under the load of a human body. It was neither the place, nor was there time, to question, or to make distinctions; seizing both in his arms, with gigantic strength, he bore them through the smoke. He soon

perceived, to his astonishment, that it was the surgeon, and the body of one of the Skinners, that he had saved.

"Archibald!" he exclaimed, "why, in the name of justice, did you bring this miscreant to light again? His deeds are rank to heaven!"

The surgeon, who had been in imminent peril, was too much bewildered to reply instantly, but wiping the moisture from his forehead, and clearing his lungs from the vapor he had inhaled, he said piteously, —

"Ah! it is all over! Had I been in time to have stopped the effusion from the jugular, he might have been saved; but the heat was conducive to hemorrhage; life is extinct indeed. Well, are there any more wounded?"

His question was put to the air, for Frances had been removed to the opposite side of the building, where her friends were collected, and Lawton had once more disappeared in the smoke.

By this time the flames had dispersed much of the suffocating vapor, so that the trooper was able to find the door, and in its very entrance he was met by a man supporting the insensible Sarah. There was but barely time to reach the lawn again, before the fire broke through the windows, and wrapped the whole building in a sheet of flame.

"God be praised!" ejaculated the preserver of Sarah; "it would have been a dreadful death to die."

The trooper turned from gazing at the edifice, to the speaker, and to his astonishment, instead of one of his own men, he beheld the pedler.

"Ha! the spy," he exclaimed; "by heavens, you cross me like a spectre."

"Captain Lawton," said Birch, leaning in momentary exhaustion against the fence, to which they had retired from the heat, "I am again in your power, for I can neither flee, nor resist."

"The cause of America is dear to me as life," said the trooper; "but she cannot require her children to forget gratitude and honor. Fly, unhappy man, while yet you are unseen, or it will exceed my power to save you."

"May God prosper you, and make you victorious over

your enemies," said Birch, grasping the hand of the dragoon with an iron strength that his meagre figure did not indicate.

"Hold!" said Lawton; "but a word — are you what you seem? — can you — are you" —

"A royal spy," interrupted Birch, averting his face, and endeavoring to release his hand.

"Then go, miserable wretch," said the trooper, relinquishing his grasp; "either avarice or delusion has led a noble heart astray!"

The bright light from the flames reached a great distance around the ruins, but the words were hardly past the lips of Lawton, before the gaunt form of the pedler had glided over the visible space, and plunged into the darkness beyond.

The eye of Lawton rested for a moment on the spot where he had last seen this inexplicable man, and then turning to the yet insensible Sarah, he lifted her in his arms, and bore her, like a sleeping infant, to the care of her friends.

CHAPTER XXIII.

And now her charms are fading fast,
Her spirits now no more are gay :
Alas! that beauty cannot last!
That flowers so sweet so soon decay!
How sad appears
The vale of years,
How changed from youth's too flattering scene!
Where are her fond admirers gone?
Alas! and shall there then be none
On whom her soul may lean?

CYNTHIA'S GRAVE.

THE walls of the cottage were all that was left of the building; and these, blackened by smoke, and stripped of their piazzas and ornaments, were but dreary memorials of the content and security that had so lately reigned within. The roof, together with the rest of the wood-work, had tumbled into the cellars, and a pale and flitting light, ascending from their embers, shone faintly through the windows. The early flight of the Skinners left the dragoons at liberty to exert themselves in saving much of the furniture, which lay scattered in heaps on the lawn, giving the finishing touch of desolation to the scene. Whenever a stronger ray of light than common shot upwards, the composed figures of Sergeant Hollister and his associates, sitting on their horses in rigid discipline, were to be seen in the background of the picture, together with the beast of Mrs. Flanagan, which, having slipped its bridle, was quietly grazing by the highway. Betty herself had advanced to the spot where the sergeant was posted, and, with an incredible degree of composure, witnessed the whole of the events as they occurred. More than once she suggested to her companion, that, as the fighting seemed to be over, the proper time for plunder had arrived; but the veteran acquainted

her with his orders, and remained both inflexible and immovable; until the washerwoman, observing Lawton come round the wing of the building with Sarah, ventured amongst the warriors. The captain, after placing Sarah on a sofa that had been hurled from the building by two of his men, retired, that the ladies might succeed him in his care. Miss Peyton and her niece flew, with a rapture that was blessed with a momentary forgetfulness of all but her preservation, to receive Sarah from the trooper; but the vacant eye and flushed cheek restored them instantly to their recollection.

"Sarah, my child, my beloved niece," said the former, folding the unconscious bride in her arms, "you are saved, and may the blessing of God await him who has been the instrument."

"See," said Sarah, gently pushing her aunt aside, and pointing to the glimmering ruins, "the windows are illuminated in honor of my arrival. They always receive a bride thus — he told me they would do no less; listen, and you will hear the bells."

"Here is no bride, no rejoicing, nothing but woe!" cried Frances, in a manner but little less frantic than that of her sister; "oh! may Heaven restore you to us — to yourself!"

"Peace, foolish young woman," said Sarah, with a smile of affected pity; "all cannot be happy at the same moment; perhaps you have no brother, or husband, to console you; you look beautiful, and you will yet find one; but," she continued, dropping her voice to a whisper, "see that he has no other wife — 'tis dreadful to think what might happen, should he be twice married."

"The shock has destroyed her mind," cried Miss Peyton; "my child, my beauteous Sarah is a maniac!"

"No, no, no," cried Frances, "it is fever; she is lightheaded — she must recover — she shall recover."

The aunt caught joyfully at the hope conveyed in this suggestion, and dispatched Katy to request the immediate aid and advice of Dr. Sitgreaves. The surgeon was found inquiring among the men for professional employment, and

inquisitively examining every bruise and scratch that he could induce the sturdy warriors to acknowledge they had received. A summons, of the sort conveyed by Katy, was instantly obeyed, and not a minute elapsed before he was by the side of Miss Peyton.

"This is a melancholy termination to so joyful a commencement of the night, madam," he observed, in a soothing manner: "but war must bring its attendant miseries; though doubtless it often supports the cause of liberty, and improves the knowledge of surgical science."

Miss Peyton could make no reply, but pointed to her niece in agony.

"'Tis fever," answered Frances; "see how glassy is her eye, and look at her cheek, how flushed."

The surgeon stood for a moment, deeply studying the outward symptoms of his patient, and then he silently took her hand in his own. It was seldom that the hard and abstracted features of Sitgreaves discovered any violent emotion; all his passions seemed schooled, and his countenance did not often betray what, indeed, his heart frequently felt. In the present instance, however, the eager gaze of the aunt and sister quickly detected his emotions. After laying his fingers for a minute on the beautiful arm, which, bared to the elbow, and glittering with jewels, Sarah suffered him to retain, he dropped it, and dashing a hand over his eyes, turned sorrowfully away.

"Here is no fever to excite — 'tis a case, my dear madam, for time and care only; these, with the blessing of God, may effect a cure."

"And where is the wretch who has caused this ruin?" exclaimed Singleton, rejecting the support of his man, and making an effort to rise from the chair to which he had been driven by debility. "It is in vain that we overcome our enemies, if, conquered, they can inflict such wounds as this."

"Dost think, foolish boy," said Lawton, with a bitter smile, "that hearts can feel in a colony? What is America but a satellite of England — to move as she moves, follow where she wists, and shine, that the mother country

may become more splendid by her radiance? Surely you forget that it is honor enough for a colonist to receive ruin from the hand of a child of Britain."

"I forget not that I wear a sword," said Singleton, falling back exhausted; "but was there no willing arm ready to avenge that lovely sufferer — to appease the wrongs of this hoary father?"

"Neither arms nor hearts are wanting, sir, in such a cause," said the trooper, fiercely; "but chance oftentimes helps the wicked. By heavens, I'd give Roanoke himself, for a clear field with the miscreant!"

"Nay! captain dear, no be parting with the horse, any way," said Betty; "it is no trifle that can be had by jist asking of the right person, if ye're in need of silver; and the baste is sure of foot, and jumps like a squirrel."

"Woman, fifty horses, aye, the best that were ever reared on the banks of the Potomac, would be but a paltry price, for one blow at a villain."

"Come," said the surgeon, "the night air can do no service to George, or these ladies, and it is incumbent on us to remove them where they can find surgical attendance and refreshment. Here is nothing but smoking ruins and the miasma of the swamps."

To this rational proposition no objection could be raised, and the necessary orders were issued by Lawton to remove the whole party to the Four Corners.

America furnished but few and very indifferent carriage-makers at the period of which we write, and every vehicle, that in the least aspired to that dignity, was the manufacture of a London mechanic. When Mr. Wharton left the city, he was one of the very few who maintained the state of a carriage; and, at the time Miss Peyton and his daughters joined him in his retirement, they had been conveyed to the cottage in the heavy chariot that had once so imposingly rolled through the windings of Queen Street, or emerged, with sombre dignity, into the more spacious drive of Broadway. This vehicle stood, undisturbed, where it had been placed on its arrival, and the age of the horses alone had protected the favorites of Cæsar from sequestra

tion by the contending forces in their neighborhood. With a heavy heart, the black, assisted by a few of the dragoons, proceeded to prepare it for the reception of the ladies. It was a cumbrous vehicle, whose faded linings and tarnished hammercloth, together with its panels of changing color, denoted the want of that art which had once given it lustre and beauty. The "lion couchant" of the Wharton arms was reposing on the reviving splendor of a blazonry that told the armorial bearings of a prince of the church; and the mitre, that began to shine through its American mask, was a symbol of the rank of its original owner. The chaise which conveyed Miss Singleton was also safe, for the stable and outbuildings had entirely escaped the flames: it certainly had been no part of the plan of the marauders to leave so well-appointed a stud behind them, but the suddenness of the attack by Lawton, not only disconcerted their arrangements on this point, but on many others also. A guard was left on the ground, under the command of Hollister, who, having discovered that his enemy was of mortal mould, took his position with admirable coolness, and no little skill, to guard against surprise. He drew off his small party to such a distance from the ruins, that it was effectually concealed in the darkness, while at the same time the light continued sufficiently powerful to discover any one who might approach the lawn with an intent to plunder.

Satisfied with this judicious arrangement, Captain Lawton made his dispositions for the march. Miss Peyton, her two nieces, and Isabella, were placed in the chariot, while the cart of Mrs. Flanagan, amply supplied with blankets and a bed, was honored with the person of Captain Singleton. Dr. Sitgreaves took charge of the chaise and Mr. Wharton. What became of the rest of the family, during that eventful night, is unknown: for Cæsar alone, of the domestics, was to be found, if we except the housekeeper. Having disposed of the whole party in this manner, Lawton gave the word to march. He remained himself, for a few minutes, alone, on the lawn, secreting various pieces of plate and other valuables, that he was fearful might

tempt the cupidity of his own men; when, perceiving nothing more that he conceived likely to overcome their honesty, he threw himself into the saddle with the soldierly intention of bringing up the rear.

"Stop, stop," cried a female voice: "will you leave me alone to be murdered? the spoon is melted, I believe, and I'll have compensation, if there's law or justice in this unhappy land."

Lawton turned an eye in the direction of the sound, and perceived a female emerging from the ruins, loaded with a bundle that vied in size with the renowned pack of the pedler.

"Whom have we here," said the trooper, "rising like a phœnix from the flames? Oh! by the soul of Hippocrates, but it is the identical she-doctor, of famous needle reputation. Well, good woman, what means this outcry?"

"Outcry!" echoed Katy, panting for breath; "is it not disparagement enough to lose a silver spoon, but I must be left alone in this lonesome place, to be robbed, and perhaps murdered? Harvey would not serve me so; when I lived with Harvey, I was always treated with respect, at least, if he was a little close with his secrets, and wasteful of his money."

"Then, madam, you once formed part of the household of Mr. Harvey Birch?"

"You may say I was the whole of his household," returned the other; "there was nobody but I, and he, and the old gentleman; you didn't know the old gentleman, perhaps?"

"That happiness was denied me: how long did you live in the family of Mr. Birch?"

"I disremember the precise time, but it must have been hard on upon nine years: and what better am I for it all?"

"Sure enough; I can see but little benefit that you have derived from the association, truly. But is there not something unusual in the movements and character of this Mr. Birch?"

"Unusual is an easy word for such unaccountables!"

replied Katy, lowering her voice, and looking around her; "he was a wonderful disregardful man, and minded a guinea no more than I do a kernel of corn. But help me to some way of joining Miss Jinitt, and I will tell you prodigies of what Harvey has done, first and last."

"You will!" exclaimed the trooper, musing; "here, give me leave to feel your arm above the elbow. There — you are not deficient in bone, let the blood be as it may." So saying, he gave the spinster a sudden whirl, that effectually confused all her faculties, until she found herself safely, if not comfortably, seated on the crupper of Lawton's steed.

"Now, madam, you have the consolation of knowing that you are as well mounted as Washington. The nag is sure of foot, and will leap like a panther."

"Let me get down," cried Katy, struggling to release herself from his iron grasp, and yet afraid of falling; "this is no way to put a woman on a horse; besides, I can't ride without a pillion."

"Softly, good madam," said Lawton; "for although Roanoke never falls before, he sometimes rises behind. He is far from being accustomed to a pair of heels beating upon his flanks like a drum-major on a field day; a single touch of the spur will serve him for a fortnight, and it is by no means wise to be kicking in this manner, for he is a horse that but little likes to be outdone."

"Let me down, I say," screamed Katy; "I shall fall and be killed. Besides, I have nothing to hold on with; my arms are full of valuables."

"True," returned the trooper, observing that he had brought bundle and all from the ground; "I perceive that you belong to the baggage-guard; but my sword-belt will encircle your little waist, as well as my own."

Katy was too much pleased with this compliment to make any resistance, while he buckled her close to his own herculean frame, and, driving a spur into his charger, they flew from the lawn with a rapidity that defied further denial. After proceeding for some time, at a rate that a good deal discomposed the spinster, they overtook the cart

of the washerwoman driving slowly over the stones, with a proper consideration for the wounds of Captain Singleton. The occurrences of that eventful night had produced an excitement in the young soldier, that was followed by the ordinary lassitude of reaction, and he lay carefully enveloped in blankets, and supported by his man, but little able to converse, though deeply brooding over the past. The dialogue between Lawton and his companion ceased with the commencement of their motions, but a foot-pace being more favorable to speech, the trooper began anew: —

"Then, you have been an inmate in the same house with Harvey Birch?"

"For more than nine years," said Katy, drawing her breath, and rejoicing greatly that their speed was abated

The deep tones of the trooper's voice were no sooner conveyed to the ears of the washerwoman, than, turning her head, where she sat directing the movements of the mare, she put into the discourse at the first pause.

"Belike, then, good woman, ye're knowing whether or no he's akin to Beelzeboob," said Betty; "it's Sargeant Hollister who's saying the same, and no fool is the sargeant, any way."

"It's a scandalous disparagement," cried Katy, vehemently, "no kinder soul than Harvey carries a pack; and for a gownd or a tidy apron, he will never take a king's farthing from a friend. Beelzebub, indeed! For what would he read the Bible, if he had dealings with the evil spirit?"

"He's an honest divil, any way; as I was saying before, the guinea was pure. But then the sargeant thinks him amiss, and it's no want of l'arning that Mister Hollister has."

"He's a fool!" said Katy tartly; "Harvey might be a man of substance, were he not so disregardful. How often have I told him, that if he did nothing but peddle, and would put his gains to use, and get married, so that things at home could be kept within doors, and leave off his dealings with the rig'lars, and all incumberments, that

he would soon become an excellent liver. Sergeant Hollister would be glad to hold a candle to him, indeed!"

"Pooh!" said Betty, in her philosophical way; "ye're no thinking that Mister Hollister is an officer, and stands next the cornet, in the troop. But this pidler gave warning of the brush the night, and it's no sure that Captain Jack would have got the day, but for the reinforcement."

"How say you, Betty," cried the trooper, bending forward on his saddle, "had you notice of our danger from Birch?"

"The very same, darling; and it's hurry I was till the boys was in motion; not but I knew ye're enough for the Cow-Boys any time. But wid the divil on your side, I was sure of the day. I'm only wondering there's so little plunder, in a business of Beelzeboob's contriving."

"I'm obliged to you for the rescue, and equally indebted to the motive."

"Is it the plunder? But little did I t'ink of it till I saw the movables on the ground, some burnt, and some broke, and other some as good as new. It would be convanient to have one feather-bed in the corps, any way."

"By heavens, 'twas timely succor! Had not Roanoke been swifter than their bullets, I must have fallen. The animal is worth his weight in gold."

"It's continental, you mane, darling. Goold weighs heavy, and is no plenty in the States. If the nagur hadn't been staying and frighting the sargeant with his copper-colored looks, and a matter of blarney 'bout ghosts, we should have been in time to have killed all the dogs, and taken the rest prisoners."

"It is very well as it is, Betty," said Lawton; "a day will yet come, I trust, when these miscreants shall be rewarded, if not in judgments upon their persons, at least in the opinions of their fellow-citizens. The time must arrive when America will learn to distinguish between a patriot and a robber."

"Speak low," said Katy; "there's some who think much of themselves, that have doings with the Skinners."

"It's more they are thinking of themselves, then, than

other people thinks of them," cried Betty; "a t'ief's a t'ief, any way; whether he stales for King George or for Congress."

"I know'd that evil would soon happen," said Katy; "the sun set to-night behind a black cloud, and the house-dog whined, although I gave him his supper with my own hands; besides, it's not a week sin' I dreamed the dream about the thousand lighted candles, and the cakes being burnt in the oven."

"Well," said Betty, "it's but little I drame, any way. Jist keep an 'asy conscience and a plenty of the stuff in ye, and ye'll sleep like an infant. The last drame I had was when the boys put the thistle-tops in the blankets, and then I was thinking that Captain Jack's man was currying me down, for the matter of Roanoke; but it's no trifle I mind either in skin or stomach."

"I'm sure," said Katy, with a stiff erection that drew Lawton back in his saddle, "no man shall ever dare to lay hands on bed of mine; it's undecent and despisable conduct."

"Pooh! pooh!" cried Betty; "if you tag after a troop of horse, a small bit of a joke must be borne: what would become of the States and liberty, if the boys had never a clane shirt, or a drop to comfort them? Ask Captain Jack, there, if they'd fight, Mrs. Beelzeboob, and they no clane linen to keep the victory in."

"I'm a single woman, and my name is Haynes," said Katy, "and I'd thank you to use no disparaging terms when speaking to me."

"You must tolerate a little license in the tongue of Mrs. Flanagan, madam," said the trooper; "the drop she speaks of is often of an extraordinary size, and then she has acquired the freedom of a soldier's manner."

"Pooh! captain, darling," cried Betty, "why do you bother the woman? talk like yeerself, dear, and it's no fool of a tongue that ye've got in yeer own head. But it's here-away that the sargeant made a halt, thinking there might be more divils than one stirring, the night. The clouds are as black as Arnold's heart, and deuce the star is

there twinkling among them. Well, the mare is used to a march after nightfall, and is smelling out the road like a pointer slut."

"It wants but little to the rising moon," observed the trooper. He called a dragoon, who was riding in advance, issued a few orders and cautions relative to the comfort and safety of Singleton, and speaking a consoling word to his friend himself, gave Roanoke the spur, and dashed by the cart, at a rate that again put to flight all the philosophy of Katharine Haynes.

"Good luck to ye, for a free rider and a bold!" shouted the washerwoman, as he passed; "if ye're meeting Mister Beelzeboob, jist back the baste up to him, and show him his consort that ye've got on the crupper. I'm thinking it's no long he'd tarry to chat. Well, well, it's his life that we saved, he was saying so himself — though the plunder is nothing to signify."

The cries of Betty Flanagan were too familiar to the ears of Captain Lawton to elicit a reply. Notwithstanding the unusual burden that Roanoke sustained, he got over the ground with great rapidity, and the distance between the cart of Mrs. Flanagan and the chariot of Miss Peyton was passed in a manner that, however it answered the intentions of the trooper, in no degree contributed to the comfort of his companion. The meeting occurred but a short distance from the quarters of Lawton, and at the same instant the moon broke from behind a mass of clouds, and threw its light upon objects.

Compared with the simple elegance and substantial comfort of the Locusts, the "Hotel Flanagan" presented but a dreary spectacle. In the place of carpeted floors and curtained windows, were the yawning cracks of a rudely-constructed dwelling, and boards and paper were ingeniously applied to supply the place of the green glass in more than half the lights. The care of Lawton had anticipated every improvement that their situation would allow, and blazing fires were made before the party arrived. The dragoons, who had been charged with this duty, had conveyed a few necessary articles of furniture,

and Miss Peyton and her companions, on alighting, found something like habitable apartments prepared for their reception. The mind of Sarah had continued to wander during the ride, and, with the ingenuity of the insane, she accommodated every circumstance to the feelings that were uppermost in her own bosom.

"It is impossible to minister to a mind that has sustained such a blow," said Lawton to Isabella Singleton; "time and God's mercy can alone cure it; but something more may be done towards the bodily comfort of all. You are a soldier's daughter, and used to scenes like this; help me to exclude some of the cold air from these windows."

Miss Singleton acceded to his request, and while Lawton was endeavoring, from without, to remedy the defect of broken panes, Isabella was arranging a substitute for a curtain within.

"I hear the cart," said the trooper, in reply to one of her interrogatories. "Betty is tender-hearted in the main; believe me, poor George will not only be safe, but comfortable."

"God bless her, for her care, and bless you all," said Isabella, fervently. "Dr. Sitgreaves has gone down the road to meet him, I know — what is that glittering in the moon?"

Directly opposite the window where they stood, were the outbuildings of the farm, and the quick eye of Lawton caught at a glance the object to which she alluded.

"'Tis the glare of fire-arms," said the trooper, springing from the window towards his charger, which yet remained caparisoned at the door. His movement was quick as thought, but a flash of fire was followed by the whistling of a bullet, before he had proceeded a step. A loud shriek burst from the dwelling, and the captain sprang into his saddle: the whole was the business of but a moment.

"Mount — mount, and follow!" shouted the trooper; and before his astonished men could understand the cause of alarm, Roanoke had carried him in safety over the fence which lay between him and his foe. The chase was for

life or death, but the distance to the rocks was again too short, and the disappointed trooper saw his intended victim vanish in their clefts, where he could not follow.

"By the life of Washington," muttered Lawton, as he sheathed his sabre, "I would have made two halves of him, had he not been so nimble on the foot — but a time will come!" So saying, he returned to his quarters, with the indifference of a man who knew his life was at any moment to be offered a sacrifice to his country. An extraordinary tumult in the house induced him to quicken his speed, and on arriving at the door, the panic-stricken Katy informed him that the bullet, aimed at his own life, had taken effect in the bosom of Miss Singleton.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Hushed were his Gertrude's lips! but still their bland
And beautiful expression seemed to melt
With love that could not die! and still his hand
She presses to the heart no more that felt.
GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

THE brief arrangements of the dragoons had prepared two apartments for the reception of the ladies, the one being intended as a sleeping room, and situated within the other. Into the latter Isabella was immediately conveyed, at her own request, and placed on a rude bed by the side of the unconscious Sarah. When Miss Peyton and Frances flew to her assistance, they found her with a smile on her pallid lip, and a composure in her countenance, that induced them to think her uninjured.

"God be praised!" exclaimed the trembling aunt; "the report of fire-arms, and your fall, had led me into an error. Surely, surely, there was enough of horror before; but this has been spared us."

Isabella pressed her hand upon her bosom, still smiling, but with a ghastliness that curdled the blood of Frances.

"Is George far distant?" she asked; "let him know — hasten him, that I may see my brother once again."

"It is as I apprehended!" shrieked Miss Peyton; "but you smile — surely you are not hurt!"

"Quite well — quite happy," murmured Isabella; "here is a remedy for every pain."

Sarah arose from the reclining posture she had taken, and gazed wildly at her companion. She stretched forth her own hand, and raised that of Isabella from her bosom. It was dyed in blood.

"See," said Sarah, "but will it not wash away love? Marry, young woman, and then no one can expel him from

your heart, unless,"— she added, whispering, and bending over the other, — "you find another there before you; then die, and go to heaven — there are no wives in heaven."

The lovely maniac hid her face under the clothes, and continued silent during the remainder of the night. At this moment Lawton entered. Inured as he was to danger in all its forms, and accustomed to the horrors of a partisan war, the trooper could not behold the ruin before him unmoved. He bent over the fragile form of Isabella, and his gloomy eye betrayed the workings of his soul.

"Isabella," he at length uttered, "I know you to possess a courage beyond the strength of women."

"Speak," she said, earnestly; "if you have anything to say, speak fearlessly."

The trooper averted his face as he replied, "None ever receive a ball there, and survive."

"I have no dread of death, Lawton," returned Isabella; "I thank you for not doubting me; I felt it from the first."

"These are not scenes for a form like yours," added the trooper: "'tis enough that Britain calls our youth to the field; but when such loveliness becomes the victim of war, I sicken of my trade."

"Hear me, Captain Lawton," said Isabella, raising herself with difficulty, but rejecting aid: "from early womanhood to the present hour have I been an inmate of camps and garrisons. I have lived to cheer the leisure of an aged father, and think you I would change those days of danger and privation for any ease? No! I have the consolation of knowing, in my dying moments, that what woman could do in such a cause, I have done."

"Who could prove a recreant, and witness such a spirit! Hundreds of warriors have I witnessed in their blood, but never a firmer soul among them all."

"'Tis the soul only," said Isabella; "my sex and strength have denied me the dearest of privileges. But to you, Captain Lawton, nature has been more bountiful; you have an arm and a heart to devote to the cause; and I know they are an arm and a heart that will prove true to the last. And George — and" — she paused, her lip quivered, and her eye sunk to the floor.

"And Dunwoodie!" added the trooper; "would you speak of Dunwoodie?"

"Name him not," said Isabella, sinking back, and concealing her face in her garments; "leave me, Lawton — prepare poor George for this unexpected blow."

The trooper continued for a little while gazing, in melancholy interest, at the convulsive shudderings of her frame, which the scanty covering could not conceal, and withdrew to meet his comrade. The interview between Singleton and his sister was painful, and, for a moment, Isabella yielded to a burst of tenderness; but, as if aware that her hours were numbered, she was the first to rouse herself to exertion. At her earnest request, the room was left to herself, the captain, and Frances. The repeated applications of the surgeon, to be permitted to use professional aid, were steadily rejected, and, at length, he was obliged unwillingly to retire.

"Raise me," said the dying young woman, "and let me look on a face that I love, once more." Frances silently complied, and Isabella turned her eyes in sisterly affection upon George. "It matters but little, my brother — a few hours must close the scene."

"Live, Isabella, my sister, my only sister!" cried the youth, with a burst of sorrow that he could not control; "my father! my poor father" —

"There is the sting of death; but he is a soldier and a Christian. Miss Wharton, I would speak of what interests you, while yet I have strength for the task."

"Nay," said Frances, tenderly, "compose yourself; let no desire to oblige me endanger a life that is precious to — to — so many." The words were nearly stifled by her emotions, for the other had touched a chord that thrilled to her heart.

"Poor, sensitive girl!" said Isabella, regarding her with tender interest; "but the world is still before you, and why should I disturb the little happiness it may afford! Dream on, lovely innocent! and may God keep the evil day of knowledge far distant!"

"Oh, there is even now little left for me to enjoy," said

Frances, burying her face in the clothes; "I am heart-stricken, in all that I most loved."

"No!" interrupted Isabella; "you have one inducement to wish for life, that pleads strongly in a woman's breast. It is a delusion that nothing but death can destroy"— Exhaustion compelled her to pause, and her auditors continued in breathless suspense, until, recovering her strength, she laid her hand on that of Frances, and continued more mildly: "Miss Wharton, if there breathes a spirit congenial to Dunwoodie's, and worthy of his love, it is your own."

A flush of fire passed over the face of the listener, and she raised her eyes, flashing with an ungovernable look of delight, to the countenance of Isabella; but the ruin she beheld recalled better feelings, and again her head dropped upon the covering of the bed. Isabella watched her emotion with a look that partook both of pity and admiration.

"Such have been the feelings that I have escaped," she continued; "yes, Miss Wharton, Dunwoodie is wholly yours."

"Be just to yourself, my sister," exclaimed the youth; "let no romantic generosity cause you to forget your own character."

She heard him, and fixed a gaze of tender interest on his face, but slowly shook her head as she replied, —

"It is not romance, but truth, that bids me speak. Oh! how much have I lived within an hour! Miss Wharton, I was born under a burning sun, and my feelings seem to have imbibed its warmth; I have existed for passion only."

"Say not so — say not so, I implore you," cried the agitated brother; "think how devoted has been your love to our aged father; how disinterested, how tender, your affection to me!"

"Yes," said Isabella, a smile of mild pleasure beaming on her countenance; "that, at least, is a reflection which may be taken to the grave."

Neither Frances nor her brother interrupted her meditations, which continued for several minutes; when, suddenly recollecting herself, she continued, —

"I remain selfish even to the last; with me, Miss Wharton, America and her liberties was my earliest pas-

sion, and" — Again she paused, and Frances thought it was the struggle of death that followed; but reviving, she proceeded: "Why should I hesitate, on the brink of the grave! Dunwoodie was my next and my last. But," burying her face in her hands, "it was a love that was unsought."

"Isabella!" exclaimed her brother, springing from the bed, and pacing the floor in disorder.

"See how dependent we become under the dominion of worldly pride; it is painful to George to learn that one he loves had not feelings superior to her nature and education."

"Say no more," whispered Frances; "you distress us both — say no more, I entreat you."

"In justice to Dunwoodie I must speak; and for the same reason, my brother, you must listen. By no act or word has Dunwoodie ever induced me to believe he wished me more than a friend: nay, latterly, I have had the burning shame of thinking that he avoided my presence."

"Would he dare?" said Singleton, fiercely.

"Peace, my brother, and listen," continued Isabella, rousing herself with an effort that was final; "here is the innocent, the justifiable cause. We are both motherless; but that aunt — that mild, plain-hearted, observing aunt, has given you the victory. Oh! how much she loses, who loses a female guardian to her youth. I have exhibited those feelings which you have been taught to repress. After this, can I wish to live?"

"Isabella! my poor Isabella! you wander in your mind."

"But one word more — for I feel that blood, which ever flowed too swiftly, rushing where nature never intended it to go. Woman must be sought to be prized; her life is one of concealed emotions; blessed are they whose early impressions make the task free from hypocrisy, for such only can be happy with men like — like Dunwoodie." Her voice failed, and she sunk back on her pillow in silence. The cry of Singleton brought the rest of the party to her bedside, but death was already upon her countenance; her remaining strength just sufficed to reach the hand of George, and pressing it to her bosom for a moment, she relinquished her grasp, and, with a slight convulsion, expired.

Frances Wharton had thought that fate had done its worst, in endangering the life of her brother, and destroying the reason of her sister; but the relief conveyed by the dying declaration of Isabella taught her that another sorrow had aided in loading her heart with grief. She saw the whole truth at a glance; nor was the manly delicacy of Dunwoodie lost upon her — everything tended to raise him in her estimation; and, for mourning that duty and pride had induced her to strive to think less of him, she was compelled to substitute regret that her own act had driven him from her in sorrow, if not in desperation. It is not in the nature of youth, however, to despair; and Frances knew a secret joy in the midst of their distress, that gave a new spring to her existence.

The sun broke forth, on the morning that succeeded this night of desolation, in unclouded lustre, and seemed to mock the petty sorrows of those who received his rays. Lawton had early ordered his steed, and was ready to mount as the first burst of light broke over the hills. His orders were already given, and the trooper threw his leg across the saddle, in silence; and, casting a glance of fierce chagrin at the narrow space that had favored the flight of the Skinner, he gave Roanoke the rein, and moved slowly towards the valley.

The stillness of death pervaded the road, nor was there a single vestige of the scenes of the night, to tarnish the loveliness of a glorious morn. Struck with the contrast between man and nature, the fearless trooper rode by each pass of danger, regardless of what might happen; nor did he rouse himself from his musing, until the noble charger, snuffing the morning air, greeted the steeds of the guard under Sergeant Hollister.

Here, indeed, was to be seen sad evidence of the midnight fray, but the trooper glanced his eye over it with the coolness of one accustomed to such sights. Without wasting the moments in useless regrets, he proceeded, at once, to business.

"Have you seen anything?" he demanded of the orderly.

"Nothing, sir, that we dared to charge upon," returned Hollister; "but we mounted once, at the report of distant fire-arms."

"'Tis well," said Lawton, gloomily. "Ah! Hollister, I would give the animal I ride, to have had your single arm between the wretch who drew that trigger and these useless rocks, which overhang every bit of ground, as if they grudged pasture to a single hoof."

"Under the light of day, and charging man to man, I am as good as another; but I can't say that I'm over-fond of fighting with those that neither steel nor lead can bring down."

"What silly crotchet is uppermost, now, in that mystified brain of thine, Deacon Hollister?"

"I like not the dark object that has been manœuvering in the skirt of the wood since the first dawn of day; and twice, during the night, it was seen marching across the firelight, no doubt with evil intent."

"Is it yon ball of black, at the foot of the rock-maple, that you mean? In truth it moves."

"But without mortal motion," said the sergeant, regarding it with awful reverence: "it glides along, but no feet have been seen by any who watch here."

"Had it wings," cried Lawton, "it is mine; stand fast, until I join." The words were hardly uttered before Roanoke was flying across the plain, and apparently verifying the boast of his master.

"Those cursed rocks!" ejaculated the trooper, as he saw the object of his pursuit approaching the hill-side; but, either from want of practice or from terror, it passed the obvious shelter they offered, and fled into the open plain.

"I have you, man or devil!" shouted Lawton, whirling his sabre from its scabbard. "Halt, and take quarter!"

His proposition was apparently acceded to; for, at the sound of his powerful voice, the figure sunk upon the ground, exhibiting a shapeless ball of black, without life or motion.

"What have we here?" cried Lawton, drawing up by its side; "a gala suit of the good maiden, Jeanette Peyton,

wandering around its birthplace, or searching in vain for its discomfited mistress?" He leaned forward in his stirrups, and placing the point of his sword under the silken garment, by throwing aside the covering, discovered part of the form of the reverend gentleman who had fled from the Locusts, the evening before, in his robes of office.

"In truth, Hollister had some ground for his alarm; an army chaplain is, at any time, a terror to a troop of horse."

The clergyman had collected enough of his disurbed faculties, to discover that it was a face he knew, and somewhat disconcerted at the terror he had manifested, and the indecent attitude in which he had been found, he endeavored to rise, and offer some explanation. Lawton received his apologies good-humoredly, if not with much faith in their truth; and, after a short communication upon the state of the valley, the trooper courteously alighted, and they proceeded towards the guard.

"I am so little acquainted, sir, with the rebel uniform, that I really was unable to distinguish, whether those men, whom you say are your own, did or did not belong to the gang of marauders."

"Apology, sir, is unnecessary," replied the trooper, curling his lip; "it is not your task, as a minister of God, to take note of the facings of a coat. The standard under which you serve is acknowledged by us all."

"I serve under the standard of his gracious Majesty, George III.," returned the priest, wiping the cold sweat from his brow; "but really the idea of being scalped has a strong tendency to unman a new-beginner, like myself."

"Scalped!" echoed Lawton, stopping short in his walk; then recollecting himself, he added, with composure, "if it is to Dunwoodie's squadron of Virginia light dragoons that you allude, it may be well to inform you that they generally take a bit of the skull with the skin."

"Oh! I can have no apprehensions of gentlemen of your appearance," said the divine, with a smirk; "it is the natives that I apprehend.'

"Natives! I have the honor to be one, I do assure you, sir."

"Nay, I beg that I may be understood — I mean the Indians; they who do nothing but rob, and murder, and destroy."

"And scalp!"

"Yes, sir, and scalp too," continued the clergyman, eying his companion a little suspiciously; "the copper-colored, savage Indians."

"And did you expect to meet those nose-jeweled gentry in the neutral ground?"

"Certainly; we understand in England that the interior swarms with them."

"And call you this the interior of America?" cried Lawton, again halting, and staring the other in the face, with a surprise too naturally expressed to be counterfeited.

"Surely, sir, I conceive myself to be in the interior."

"Attend," said Lawton, pointing towards the east; "see you not that broad sheet of water which the eye cannot compass? thither lies the England you deem worthy to hold dominion over half the world. See you the land of your nativity?"

"'Tis impossible to behold objects at a distance of three thousand miles!" exclaimed the wondering priest, a little suspicious of his companion's sanity.

"No! what a pity it is that the powers of man are not equal to his ambition. Now turn your eyes westward; observe that vast expanse of water which rolls between the shores of America and China."

"I see nothing but land," said the trembling priest; "there is no water to be seen."

"'Tis impossible to behold objects at a distance of three thousand miles!" repeated Lawton, pursuing his walk: "if you apprehend the savages, seek them in the ranks of your prince. Rum and gold have preserved their loyalty."

"Nothing is more probable than my being deceived," said the man of peace, casting furtive glances at the colossal stature and whiskered front of his companion; "but the rumors we have at home, and the uncertainty of meeting with such an enemy as yourself, induced me to fly at your approach."

"'Twas not judiciously determined," said the trooper, "as Roanoke has the heels of you greatly; and flying from Scylla, you were liable to encounter Charybdis. Those woods and rocks cover the very enemies you dread."

"The savages!" exclaimed the divine, instinctively placing the trooper in the rear.

"More than savages; men who, under the guise of patriotism, prowl through the community, with a thirst for plunder that is unsatiable, and a love of cruelty that mocks the ingenuity of the Indian — fellows whose mouths are filled with liberty and equality, and whose hearts are overflowing with cupidity and gall — gentlemen that are ycleped the Skinners."

"I have heard them mentioned in our army," said the frightened divine, "and had thought them to be the aborigines."

"You did the savages injustice."

They now approached the spot occupied by Hollister, who witnessed with surprise the character of the prisoner made by his captain. Lawton gave his orders, and the men immediately commenced securing and removing such articles of furniture as were thought worthy of the trouble; and the captain, with his reverend associate, who was mounted on a mettled horse, returned to the quarters of the troop.

It was the wish of Singleton that the remains of his sister should be conveyed to the post commanded by his father, and preparations were early made to this effect. The wounded British were placed under the control of the chaplain; and towards the middle of the day Lawton saw all the arrangements so far completed, as to render it probable that in a few hours he would be left, with his small party, in undisturbed possession of the Corners.

While leaning in the door-way, gazing in moody silence at the ground which had been the scene of the last night's chase, his ear caught the sound of a horse, and the next moment a dragoon of his own troop appeared dashing up the road, as if on business of the last importance. The steed was foaming, and the rider had the appearance of

having done a day's service. Without speaking, he placed a letter in the hand of Lawton, and led his charger to the stable. The trooper knew the hand of the major, and ran his eye over the following: —

"I rejoice it is the order of Washington, that the family of the Locusts are to be removed above the Highlands. They are to be admitted to the society of Captain Wharton, who waits only for their testimony to be tried. You will communicate this order, and with proper delicacy I do not doubt. The English are moving up the river; and the moment you see the Whartons in safety, break up and join your troop. There will be good service to be done when we meet, as Sir Henry is reported to have sent out a real soldier in command. Reports must be made to the commandant at Peekskill, for Colonel Singleton is withdrawn to headquarters, to preside over the inquiry upon poor Wharton. Fresh orders have been sent to hang the pedler if we can take him, but they are not from the commander-in-chief. Detail a small guard with the ladies, and get into the saddle as soon as possible.

"Yours, sincerely, PEYTON DUNWOODIE."

This communication entirely changed the whole arrangement. There was no longer any motive for removing the body of Isabella, since her father was no longer with his command, and Singleton reluctantly acquiesced in an immediate interment. A retired and lovely spot was selected, near the foot of the adjacent rocks, and such rude preparations were made as the time and the situation of the country permitted. A few of the neighboring inhabitants collected from curiosity and interest, and Miss Peyton and Frances wept in sincerity over her grave. The solemn offices of the church were performed by the minister, who had so lately stood forth to officiate in another and very different duty; and Lawton bent his head, and passed his hand across his brow, while the words that accompanied the first clod were uttered.

A new stimulus was given to the Whartons by the in-

telligence conveyed in the letter of Dunwoodie; and Cæsar, with his horses, was once more put in requisition. The relics of the property were entrusted to a neighbor, in whom they had confidence; and, accompanied by the unconscious Sarah, and attended by four dragoons and all of the American wounded, Mr. Wharton's party took their departure. They were speedily followed by the English chaplain, with his countrymen, who were conveyed to the water-side, where a vessel was in waiting to receive them. Lawton joyfully witnessed these movements; and as soon as the latter were out of sight, he ordered his own bugle to sound. Everything was instantly in motion. The mare of Mrs. Flanagan was again fastened to the cart; Dr. Sitgreaves exhibited his shapeless form once more on horseback; and the trooper appeared in the saddle, rejoicing in his emancipation.

The word to march was given; and Lawton, throwing a look of sullen ferocity at the place of the Skinner's concealment, and another of melancholy regret towards the grave of Isabella, led the way, accompanied by the surgeon in a brown study; while Sergeant Hollister and Betty brought up the rear, leaving a fresh southerly wind to whistle through the open doors and broken windows of the "Hotel Flanagan," where the laugh of hilarity, the joke of the hardy partisan, and the lamentations of the sorrowing, had so lately echoed.

CHAPTER XXV.

No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter, lingering, chills the lap of May;
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

GOLDSMITH.

THE roads of West-Chester are, at this hour, below the improvements of the country. Their condition at the time of the tale has already been alluded to in these pages; and the reader will, therefore, easily imagine the task assumed by Cæsar, when he undertook to guide the translated chariot of the English prelate through their windings, into one of the less frequented passes of the Highlands of the Hudson.

While Cæsar and his steeds were contending with these difficulties, the inmates of the carriage were too much engrossed with their own cares to attend to those who served them. The mind of Sarah had ceased to wander so wildly as at first; but at every advance that she made towards reason, she seemed to retire a step from animation; from being excited and flighty, she was gradually becoming moody and melancholy. There were moments, indeed, when her anxious companions thought that they could discern marks of recollection; but the expression of exquisite woe that accompanied these transient gleams of reason, forced them to the dreadful alternative of wishing that she might forever be spared the agony of thought. The day's march was performed chiefly in silence, and the party found shelter for the night in different farmhouses.

The following morning the cavalcade dispersed. The wounded diverged towards the river, with the intention of taking water at Peekskill, in order to be transported

to the hospitals of the American army above. The litter of Singleton was conveyed to a part of the Highlands where his father held his quarters, and where it was intended that the youth should complete his cure; the carriage of Mr. Wharton, accompanied by a wagon conveying the housekeeper and what baggage had been saved, and could be transported, resumed its route towards the place where Henry Wharton was held in duresse, and where he only waited their arrival to be put on trial for his life.

The country which lies between the waters of the Hudson and Long Island Sound, is, for the first forty miles from their junction, a succession of hills and dales. The land bordering on the latter then becomes less abrupt, and gradually assumes a milder appearance, until it finally melts into the lovely plains and meadows of the Connecticut. But as you approach the Hudson, the rugged aspect increases, until you at length meet with the formidable barrier of the Highlands. Here the neutral ground ceased. The royal army held the two points of land that commanded the southern entrance of the river into the mountains; but all the remaining passes were guarded by the Americans.

We have already stated that the pickets of the continental army were sometimes pushed low into the country, and that the hamlet of the White Plains was occasionally maintained by parties of its troops. At other times, the advanced guards were withdrawn to the northern extremity of the county, and, as has been shown, the intermediate country was abandoned to the ravages of the miscreants who plundered between both armies, serving neither.

The road taken by our party was not the one that communicates between the two principal cities of the State, but was a retired and unfrequented pass, that to this hour is but little known, and which, entering the hills near the eastern boundary, emerges into the plain above, many miles from the Hudson.

It would have been impossible for the tired steeds of

Mr. Wharton to drag the heavy chariot up the lengthened and steep ascents which now lay before them; and a pair of country horses were procured, with but little regard to their owner's wishes, by the two dragoons who still continued to accompany the party. With their assistance, Cæsar was enabled to advance, by slow and toilsome steps, into the bosom of the hills. Willing to relieve her own melancholy by breathing a fresher air, and also to lessen the weight, Frances alighted as they reached the foot of the mountain. She found that Katy had made similar preparations, with the like intention of walking to the summit. It was near the setting of the sun, and, from the top of the mountain, their guard had declared that the end of their journey might be discerned. Frances moved forward with the elastic step of youth; and, followed by the housekeeper at a little distance, she soon lost sight of the sluggish carriage, that was slowly toiling up the hill, occasionally halting to allow the cattle to breathe.

"Oh, Miss Fanny, what dreadful times these be!" said Katy, when they paused for breath themselves; "I know'd that calamity was about to befall, ever sin' the streak of blood was seen in the clouds."

"There has been blood upon earth, Katy, though but little is ever seen in the clouds."

"Not blood in the clouds!" echoed the housekeeper; "yes, that there has, often, and comets with fiery, smoking tails. Didn't people see armed men in the heavens, the year the war begun? and, the night before the battle of the Plains, wasn't there thunder, like the cannon themselves? Ah! Miss Fanny, I'm fearful that no good can follow rebellion against the Lord's anointed!"

"These events are certainly dreadful," returned Frances, "and enough to sicken the stoutest heart. But what can be done, Katy? Gallant and independent men are unwilling to submit to oppression; and I am fearful that such scenes are but too common in war."

"If I could but see anything to fight about," said Katy, renewing her walk as the young lady proceeded, "I shouldn't mind it so much. 'Twas said the king wanted

all the tea for his own family, at one time; and then again, that he meant the colonies should pay over to him all their earnings. Now this is matter enough to fight about — for I'm sure that no one, however he may be lord or king, has a right to the hard earnings of another. Then it was all contradicted, and some said Washington wanted to be king himself; so that, between the two, one doesn't know which to believe."

"Believe neither — for neither is true. I do not pretend to understand, myself, all the merits of this war, Katy; but to me it seems unnatural, that a country like this should by ruled by another so distant as England."

"So I have heard Harvey say to his father, that is dead and in his grave," returned Katy, approaching nearer to the young lady, and lowering her voice. "Many is the good time that I've listened to them talking, when all the neighborhood was asleep; and such conversations, Miss Fanny, that you can have no idea on! Well, to say the truth, Harvey was a mystified body, and he was like the winds in the good book; no one could tell whence he came, or whither he went."

Frances glanced her eye at her companion with an apparent desire to hear more.

"There are rumors abroad relative to the character of Harvey," she said, "that I should be sorry were true."

"'Tis a disparagement, every word on't," cried Katy, vehemently; "Harvey had no more dealings with Belzebub than you or I had. I'm sure if Harvey had sold himself, he would take care to be better paid; though, to speak the truth, he was always a wasteful and disregardful man."

"Nay, nay," returned the smiling Frances, "I have no such injurious suspicion of him; but has he not sold himself to an earthly prince — one too much attached to the interests of his native island to be always just to this country?"

"To the king's majesty!" replied Katy. "Why, Miss Fanny, your own brother that is in jail serves King George."

"True," said Frances, "but not in secret — openly, manfully, and bravely."

"'Tis said he is a spy, and why ain't one spy as bad as another?"

"'Tis untrue; no act of deception is worthy of my brother; nor of any would he be guilty, for so base a purpose as gain, or promotion."

"Well, I'm sure," said Katy, a little appalled at the manner of the young lady, "if a body does the work, he should be paid for it. Harvey is by no means partic'lar about getting his lawful dues; and I dar'st to say, if the truth was forthcoming, King George owes him money this very minute."

"Then you acknowledge his connection with the British army," said Frances; "I confess there have been moments when I have thought differently."

"Lord, Miss Fanny, Harvey is a man that no calculation can be made on. Though I lived in his house for a long concourse of years, I have never known whether he belonged above or below.[1] The time that Burg'yne was taken he came home, and there was great doings between him and the old gentleman, but for the life I couldn't tell if 'twas joy or grief. Then, here, the other day, when the great British general — I'm sure I have been so flurried with losses and troubles, that I forget his name" —

"André," said Frances.

"Yes, Ondree; when he was hanged, acrost the Tappaan, the old gentleman was near hand to going crazy about it, and didn't sleep for night nor day, till Harvey got back; and then his money was mostly golden guineas; but the Skinners took it all, and now he is a beggar, or, what's the same thing, despisable for poverty and want."

To this speech Frances made no reply, but continued her walk up the hill, deeply engaged in her own reflections. The allusion to André had recalled her thoughts to the situation of her own brother.

[1] The American party was called the party belonging "above," and the British that of "below." The terms had reference to the course of the Hudson.

They soon reached the highest point in their toilsome progress to the summit, and Frances seated herself on a rock to rest and to admire. Immediately at her feet lay a deep dell, but little altered by cultivation, and dark with the gloom of a November sunset. Another hill rose opposite to the place where she sat, at no great distance, along whose rugged sides nothing was to be seen but shapeless rocks, and oaks whose stinted growth showed a meagre soil.

To be seen in their perfection, the Highlands must be passed immediately after the fall of the leaf. The scene is then the finest, for neither the scanty foliage which the summer lends the trees, nor the snows of winter, are present to conceal the minutest objects from the eye. Chilling solitude is the characteristic of the scenery; nor is the mind at liberty, as in March, to look forward to a renewed vegetation that is soon to check, without improving, the view.

The day had been cloudy and cool, and thin fleecy clouds hung around the horizon, often promising to disperse, but as frequently disappointing Frances in the hope of catching a parting beam from the setting sun. At length a solitary gleam struck on the base of the mountain on which she was gazing, and moved gracefully up its side, until reaching the summit, it stood for a minute, forming a crown of glory to the sombre pile. So strong were the rays, that what was before indistinct now clearly opened to the view. With a feeling of awe at being thus unexpectedly admitted, as it were, into the secrets of that desert place, Frances gazed intently, until, among the scattered trees and fantastic rocks, something like a rude structure was seen. It was low, and so obscured by the color of its materials, that but for its roof, and the glittering of a window, it must have escaped her notice. While yet lost in the astonishment created by discovering a habitation in such a spot, on moving her eyes she perceived another object that increased her wonder. It apparently was a human figure, but of singular mould and unusual deformity. It stood on the edge of a rock, a

little above the hut, and it was no difficult task for our heroine to fancy it was gazing at the vehicles that were ascending the side of the mountain beneath her. The distance, however, was too great to distinguish with precision. After looking at it a moment in breathless wonder, Frances had just come to the conclusion that it was ideal, and that what she saw was a part of the rock itself, when the object moved swiftly from its position, and glided into the hut, at once removing every doubt as to the nature of either. Whether it was owing to the recent conversation that she had been holding with Katy, or to some fancied resemblance that she discerned, Frances thought, as the figure vanished from her view, that it bore a marked likeness to Birch, moving under the weight of his pack. She continued to gaze towards the mysterious residence, when the gleam of light passed away, and at the same instant the tones of a bugle rang through the glens and hollows, and were reëchoed in every direction. Springing on her feet, the alarmed girl heard the trampling of horses, and directly a party in the well-known uniform of the Virginians came sweeping round the point of a rock near her, and drew up at a short distance. Again the bugle sounded a lively strain, and before the agitated Frances had time to rally her thoughts, Dunwoodie dashed by the party of dragoons, threw himself from his charger, and advanced to her side.

His manner was earnest and interested, but in a slight degree constrained. In a few words he explained that he had been ordered up, with a party of Lawton's men, in the absence of the captain himself, to attend the trial of Henry, which was fixed for the morrow; and that, anxious for their safety in the rude passes of the mountain, he had ridden a mile or two in quest of the travellers. Frances explained, with trembling voice, the reason of her being in advance, and taught him momentarily to expect the arrival of her father. The constraint of his manner had, however, unwillingly on her part, communicated itself to her own deportment, and the approach of the chariot was a relief to both. The major handed her in, spoke a few words of en-

couragement to Mr. Wharton and Miss Peyton, and, again mounting, led the way towards the plains of Fishkill, which broke on their sight, on turning the rock, with the effect of enchantment. A short half-hour brought them to the door of the farm-house which the care of Dunwoodie had already prepared for their reception, and where Captain Wharton was anxiously expecting their arrival.

CHAPTER XXVI.

> These limbs are strengthened with a soldier's toil,
> Nor has this cheek been ever blanched with fear —
> But this sad tale of thine enervates all
> Within me that I once could boast as man;
> Chill trembling agues seize upon my frame,
> And tears of childish sorrow pour, apace,
> Through scarrèd channels that were marked by wounds.
>
> DUO.

THE friends of Henry Wharton had placed so much reliance on his innocence, that they were unable to see the full danger of his situation. As the moment of trial, however, approached, the uneasiness of the youth himself increased; and after spending most of the night with his afflicted family, he awoke, on the following morning, from a short and disturbed slumber, to a clearer sense of his condition, and a survey of the means that were to extricate him from it with life. The rank of André, and the importance of the measures he was plotting, together with the powerful intercessions that had been made in his behalf, occasioned his execution to be stamped with greater notoriety than the ordinary events of the war. But spies were frequently arrested; and the instances that occurred of summary punishment for this crime were numerous. These were facts that were well known to both Dunwoodie and the prisoner; and to their experienced judgments the preparations for the trial were indeed alarming. Notwithstanding their apprehensions, they succeeded so far in concealing them, that neither Miss Peyton nor Frances was aware of their extent. A strong guard was stationed in the outbuilding of the farm-house where the prisoner was quartered, and several sentinels watched the avenues that approached the dwelling. Another was constantly near the room of the British officer. A court was already de-

tailed to examine into the circumstances; and upon their decision the fate of Henry rested.

The moment at length arrived, and the different actors in the approaching investigation assembled. Frances experienced a feeling like suffocation, as, after taking her seat in the midst of her family, her eyes wandered over the group who were thus collected. The judges, three in number, sat by themselves, clad in the vestments of their profession, and maintained a gravity worthy of the occasion, and becoming in their rank. In the centre was a man of advanced years, and whose whole exterior bore the stamp of early and long-tried military habits. This was the president of the court; and Frances, after taking a hasty and unsatisfactory view of his associates, turned to his benevolent countenance as to the harbinger of mercy to her brother. There was a melting and subdued expression in the features of the veteran, that, contrasted with the rigid decency and composure of the others, could not fail to attract her notice. His attire was strictly in conformity to the prescribed rules of the service to which he belonged; but while his air was erect and military, his fingers trifled with a kind of convulsive and unconscious motion, with a bit of crape that entwined the hilt of the sword on which his body partly reclined, and which, like himself, seemed a relic of older times. There were the workings of an unquiet soul within; but his military front blended awe with the pity that its exhibition excited. His associates were officers selected from the eastern troops, who held the fortresses of West Point and the adjacent passes; they were men who had attained the meridian of life, and the eye sought in vain the expression of any passion or emotion on which it might seize as an indication of human infirmity. In their demeanor there was a mild, but a grave, intellectual reserve. If there was no ferocity nor harshness to chill, neither was there compassion nor interest to attract. They were men who had long acted under the dominion of a prudent reason, and whose feelings seemed trained to a perfect submission to their judgments.

Before these arbiters of his fate Henry Wharton was

ushered under the custody of armed men. A profound and awful silence succeeded his entrance, and the blood of Frances chilled as she noted the grave character of the whole proceedings. There was but little of pomp in the preparations, to impress her imagination; but the reserved, business-like air of the whole scene made it seem, indeed, as if the destinies of life awaited the result. Two of the judges sat in grave reserve, fixing their inquiring eyes on the object of their investigation; but the president continued gazing around with uneasy, convulsive motions of the muscles of the face, that indicated a restlessness, foreign to his years and duty. It was Colonel Singleton, who, but the day before, had learned the fate of Isabella, but who stood forth in the discharge of a duty that his country required at his hands. The silence, and the expectation in every eye, at length struck him, and making an effort to collect himself, he spoke, in the tones of one used to authority.

"Bring forth the prisoner," he said, with a wave of the hand.

The sentinels dropped the points of their bayonets towards the judges, and Henry Wharton advanced, with a firm step, into the centre of the apartment. All was now anxiety and eager curiosity. Frances turned for a moment in grateful emotion, as the deep and perturbed breathing of Dunwoodie reached her ears; but her brother again concentrated all her interest in one feeling of intense care. In the background were arranged the inmates of the family who owned the dwelling, and behind them, again, was a row of shining faces of ebony, glistening with pleased wonder. Amongst these was the faded lustre of Cæsar Thompson's countenance.

"You are said," continued the president, "to be Henry Wharton, a captain in his Britannic Majesty's 60th regiment of foot."

"I am."

"I like your candor, sir; it partakes of the honorable feelings of a soldier, and cannot fail to impress your judges favorably."

"It would be prudent," said one of his companions, "to

advise the prisoner that he is bound to answer no more than he deems necessary: although we are a court of martial law, yet, in this respect, we own the principles of all free governments."

A nod of approbation from the silent member was bestowed on this remark, and the president proceeded with caution, referring to the minutes he held in his hand.

"It is an accusation against you, that, being an officer of the enemy, you passed the pickets of the American army at the White Plains, in disguise, on the 29th of October last, whereby you are suspected of views hostile to the interests of America, and have subjected yourself to the punishment of a spy."

The mild but steady tones of the speaker, as he slowly repeated the substance of this charge, were full of authority. The accusation was so plain, the facts so limited, the proof so obvious, and the penalty so well established, that escape seemed impossible. But Henry replied, with earnest grace, —

"That I passed your pickets in disguise, is true; but" —

"Peace!" interrupted the president; "the usages of war are stern enough in themselves; you need not aid them to your own condemnation."

"The prisoner can retract that declaration, if he please," remarked another judge. "His confession, if taken, goes fully to prove the charge."

"I retract nothing that is true," said Henry proudly.

The two nameless judges heard him in silent composure, yet there was no exultation mingled with their gravity. The president now appeared, however, to take new interest in the scene.

"Your sentiment is noble, sir," he said; "I only regret that a youthful soldier should so far be misled by loyalty as to lend himself to the purposes of deceit."

"Deceit!" echoed Wharton; "I thought it prudent to guard against capture from my enemies."

"A soldier, Captain Wharton, should never meet his enemy but openly, and with arms in his hands. I have served two kings of England, as I now serve my native

land: but never did I approach a foe, unless under the light of the sun, and with honest notice that an enemy was nigh."

"You are at liberty to explain what your motives were in entering the ground held by our army in disguise," said the other judge, with a slight movement of the muscles of his mouth.

"I am the son of this aged man before you," continued Henry. "It was to visit him that I encountered the danger. Besides, the country below is seldom held by your troops, and its very name implies a right to either party to move at pleasure over its territory."

"Its name, as a neutral ground, is unauthorized by law; it is an appellation that originates with the condition of the country. But wherever an army goes, it carries its rights along, and the first is the ability to protect itself."

"I am no casuist, sir," returned the youth; "but I feel that my father is entitled to my affection, and I would encounter greater risks to prove it to him in his old age."

"A very commendable spirit," cried the veteran; "come gentlemen, this business brightens. I confess, at first, it was very bad, but no man can censure him for desiring to see his parents."

"And have you proof that such only was your intention?"

"Yes — here," said Henry, admitting a ray of hope; "here is proof — my father, my sister, Major Dunwoodie, all know it."

"Then, indeed," returned his immovable judge, "we may be able to save you. It would be well, sir, to examine further into this business."

"Certainly," said the president, with alacrity; "let the elder Mr. Wharton approach and take the oath."

The father made an effort at composure, and, advancing with a feeble step, he complied with the necessary forms of the court.

"You are the father of the prisoner?" said Colonel Singleton, in a subdued voice, after pausing a moment in respect for the agitation of the witness.

"He is my only son."

"And what do you know of his visit to your house, on the 29th day of October last?"

"He came, as he told you, to see me and his sisters."

"Was he in disguise?" asked the other judge.

"He did not wear the uniform of the 60th."

"To see his sisters, too!" said the president with great emotion. "Have you daughters, sir?"

"I have two — both are in this house."

"Had he a wig?" interrupted the officer.

"There was some such thing, I do believe, upon his head."

"And how long had you been separated?" asked the president.

"One year and two months."

"Did he wear a loose great-coat of coarse materials?" inquired the officer, referring to the paper that contained the charges.

"There was an over-coat."

"And you think that it was to see you, only, that he came out?"

"Me, and my daughters."

"A boy of spirit," whispered the president to his silent comrade. "I see but little harm in such a freak; 'twas imprudent, but then it was kind."

"Do you know that your son was intrusted with no commission from Sir Henry Clinton, and that the visit to you was not merely a cloak to other designs?"

"How can I know it?" said Mr. Wharton, in alarm; "would Sir Henry intrust me with such a business?"

"Know you anything of this pass?" exhibiting the paper that Dunwoodie had retained when Wharton was taken.

"Nothing — upon my honor, nothing," cried the father shrinking from the paper as from contagion.

"On your oath?"

"Nothing."

"Have you other testimony? — this does not avail you, Captain Wharton. You have been taken in a situation

where your life is forfeited: the labor of proving your innocence rests with yourself. Take time to reflect, and be cool."

There was a frightful calmness in the manner of this judge that appalled the prisoner. In the sympathy of Colonel Singleton, he could easily lose sight of his danger; but the obdurate and collected air of the others was ominous of his fate. He continued silent, casting imploring glances towards his friend. Dunwoodie understood the appeal, and offered himself as a witness. He was sworn, and desired to relate what he knew. His statement did not materially alter the case, and Dunwoodie felt that it could not. To him personally but little was known, and that little rather militated against the safety of Henry than otherwise. His account was listened to in silence, and the significant shake of the head that was made by the silent member spoke too plainly what effect it had produced.

"Still you think that the prisoner had no other object than what he has avowed?" said the president, when he had ended.

"None other, I will pledge my life," cried the major, with fervor.

"Will you swear it?" asked the immovable judge.

"How can I? God alone can tell the heart; but I have known this gentleman from a boy; deceit never formed part of his character. He is above it."

"You say that he escaped, and was retaken in open arms?" said the president.

"He was; nay, he received a wound in the combat. You see he yet moves his arm with difficulty. Would he, think you, sir, have trusted himself where he could fall again into our hands, unless conscious of innocence?"

"Would André have deserted a field of battle, Major Dunwoodie, had he encountered such an event, near Tarrytown?" asked his deliberate examiner. "Is it not natural to youth to seek glory?"

"Do you call this glory?" exclaimed the major; "an ignominious death, and a tarnished name."

"Major Dunwoodie," returned the other, still with inveterate gravity, "you have acted nobly; your duty has been arduous and severe, but it has been faithfully and honorably discharged; ours must not be less so."

During the examination, the most intense interest prevailed among the hearers. With that kind of feeling which could not separate the principle from the cause, most of the auditors thought that if Dunwoodie failed to move the hearts of Henry's judges, no other possessed the power. Cæsar thrust his misshapen form forward; and his features, so expressive of the concern he felt, and so different from the vacant curiosity pictured in the countenance of the other blacks, caught the attention of the silent judge. For the first time he spoke: —

"Let that black be brought forward."

It was too late to retreat, and Cæsar found himself confronted with a row of rebel officers, before he knew what was uppermost in his thoughts. The others yielded the examination to the one who suggested it, and using all due deliberation, he proceeded accordingly.

"You know the prisoner?"

"I t'ink he ought," returned the black, in a manner as sententious as that of his examiner.

"Did he give you the wig, when he threw it aside?"

"I don't want 'em," grumbled Cæsar; "got a berry good hair heself."

"Were you employed in carrying any letters or messages while Captain Wharton was in your master's house?"

"I do what a tell me," returned the black.

"But what did they tell you to do?"

"Sometime a one t'ing — sometime anoder."

"Enough," said Colonel Singleton, with dignity; "you have the noble acknowledgment of a gentleman, what more can you obtain from this slave? Captain Wharton, you perceive the unfortunate impression against you. Have you other testimony to adduce?"

To Henry there now remained but little hope; his confidence in his security was fast ebbing, but with an indefi-

nite expectation of assistance from the loveliness of his sister, he fixed an earnest gaze on the pallid features of Frances. She arose, and with a tottering step moved towards the judges; the paleness of her cheek continued but for a moment, and gave place to a flush of fire, and with a light but firm tread, she stood before them. Raising her hand to her polished forehead, Frances threw aside her exuberant locks, and displayed a picture of beauty and innocence to their view that might have moved even sterner natures. The president shrouded his eyes for a moment, as if the wild eye and speaking countenance recalled the image of another. The movement was transient, and recovering himself, he said, with an earnestness that betrayed his secret wishes, —

"To you, then, your brother previously communicated his intention of paying your family a secret visit?"

"No! — no!" said Frances, pressing her hand on her brain, as if to collect her thoughts; "he told me nothing — we knew not of the visit until he arrived; but can it be necessary to explain to gallant men, that a child would incur hazard to meet his only parent, and that in times like these, and in a situation like ours?"

"But was this the first time? Did he never even talk of doing so before?" inquired the colonel, leaning towards her with paternal interest.

"Certainly — certainly," cried Frances, catching the expression of his own benevolent countenance. "This is but the fourth of his visits."

"I knew it!" exclaimed the veteran, rubbing his hands with delight; "an adventurous, warm-hearted son — I warrant me, gentlemen, a fiery soldier in the field! In what disguises did he come?"

"In none, for none were then necessary; the royal troops covered the country, and gave him safe passage."

"And was this the first of his visits out of the uniform of his regiment?" asked the colonel, in a suppressed voice, avoiding the penetrating looks of his companions.

"Oh! the very first," exclaimed the eager girl; "his first offense, I do assure you, if offense it be."

"But you wrote him — you urged the visit; surely, young lady, you wished to see your brother?" added the impatient colonel.

"That we wished it, and prayed for it, — oh, how fervently we prayed for it! — is true; but to have held communion with the royal army would have endangered our father, and we dared not."

"Did he leave the house until taken, or had he intercourse with any out of your own dwelling?"

"With none — no one, excepting our neighbor, the pedler Birch."

"With whom!" exclaimed the colonel, turning pale, and shrinking as from the sting of an adder.

Dunwoodie groaned aloud, and striking his head with his hand, cried, in piercing tones, "He is lost!" and rushed from the apartment.

"But Harvey Birch," repeated Frances, gazing wildly at the door through which her lover had disappeared.

"Harvey Birch!" echoed all the judges. The two immovable members of the court exchanged looks, and threw an inquisitive glance at their prisoner.

"To you, gentlemen, it can be no new intelligence to hear that Harvey Birch is suspected of favoring the royal cause," said Henry, again advancing before the judges; "for he has already been condemned by your tribunals to the fate that I now see awaits myself. I will therefore explain, that it was by his assistance I procured the disguise, and passed your pickets; but to my dying moment, and with my dying breath, I will avow, that my intentions were as pure as the innocent being before you."

"Captain Wharton," said the president, solemnly, "the enemies of American liberty have made mighty and subtle efforts to overthrow our power. A more dangerous man, for his means and education, is not ranked among our foes than this pedler of West-Chester. He is a spy — artful, delusive, and penetrating, beyond the abilities of any of his class. Sir Henry could not do better than to associate him with the officer in his next attempt. He would have saved André. Indeed, young man, this is a connection that may prove fatal to you!"

The honest indignation that beamed on the countenance of the aged warrior was met by a look of perfect conviction on the part of his comrades.

"I have ruined him!" cried Frances, clasping her hands in terror; "do you desert us? then he is lost, indeed!"

"Forbear! lovely innocent forbear!" said the colonel, with strong emotion; "you injure none, but distress us all."

"Is it then such a crime to possess natural affection?" said Frances, wildly; "would Washington — the noble, upright, impartial Washington, judge so harshly? delay, till Washington can hear his tale."

"It is impossible," said the president, covering his eyes, as if to hide her beauty from his view.

"Impossible! oh! but for a week suspend your judgment. On my knees I entreat you, as you will expect mercy yourself, when no human power can avail you, give him but a day."

"It is impossible," repeated the colonel, in a voice that was nearly choked; "our orders are peremptory, and too long delay has been given already."

He turned from the kneeling suppliant, but could not, or would not, extricate the hand that she grasped with frenzied fervor.

"Remand your prisoner," said one of the judges to the officer who had the charge of Henry. "Colonel Singleton, shall we withdraw?"

"Singleton! Singleton!" echoed Frances; "then you are a father, and know how to pity a father's woes: you cannot, will not, wound a heart that is now nearly crushed. Hear me, Colonel Singleton; as God will listen to your dying prayers, hear me, and spare my brother!"

"Remove her," said the colonel, gently endeavoring to extricate his hand; but none appeared disposed to obey. Frances eagerly strove to read the expression of his averted face, and resisted all his efforts to retire.

"Colonel Singleton! how lately was your own son in suffering and in danger! under the roof of my father he

was cherished — under my father's roof he found shelter and protection. Oh! suppose that son the pride of your age, the solace and protection of your infant children, and then pronounce my brother guilty, if you dare!"

"What right has Heath to make an executioner of me!" exclaimed the veteran fiercely, rising with a face flushed like fire, and every vein and artery swollen with suppressed emotion. "But I forget myself; come, gentlemen, let us mount; our painful duty must be done."

"Mount not! go not!" shrieked Frances; "can you tear a son from his parent — a brother from his sister, so coldly? Is this the cause I have so ardently loved? Are these the men that I have been taught to reverence? But you relent, you do hear me, you will pity and forgive."

"Lead on, gentlemen," said the colonel, motioning towards the door, and erecting himself into an air of military grandeur, in the vain hope of quieting his feelings.

"Lead not on, but hear me," cried Frances, grasping his hand convulsively; "Colonel Singleton, you are a father! — pity — mercy — mercy for the son! mercy for the daughter! Yes — you had a daughter. On this bosom she poured out her last breath; these hands closed her eyes; these very hands, that are now clasped in prayer, did those offices for her that you condemn my poor, poor brother, to require."

One mighty emotion the veteran struggled with, and quelled; but with a groan that shook his whole frame. He even looked around in conscious pride at his victory; but a second burst of feeling conquered. His head, white with the frost of seventy winters, sunk upon the shoulder of the frantic suppliant. The sword that had been his companion in so many fields of blood dropped from his nerveless hand, and as he cried, "May God bless you for the deed!" he wept aloud.

Long and violent was the indulgence that Colonel Singleton yielded to his feelings. On recovering, he gave the senseless Frances into the arms of her aunt, and, turning with an air of fortitude to his comrades, he said, —

"Still, gentlemen, we have our duty as officers to dis-

charge; our feelings as men may be indulged hereafter What is your pleasure with the prisoner?"

One of the judges placed in his hand a written sentence, that he had prepared while the colonel was engaged with Frances, and declared it to be the opinion of himself and his companion.

It briefly stated that Henry Wharton had been detected in passing the lines of the American army as a spy, and in disguise. That thereby, according to the laws of war, he was liable to suffer death, and that this court adjudged him to the penalty; recommending him to be executed by hanging, before nine o'clock on the following morning.

It was not usual to inflict capital punishments, even on the enemy, without referring the case to the commander-in-chief, for his approbation; or, in his absence, to the officer commanding for the time being. But, as Washington held his headquarters at New-Windsor, on the western bank of the Hudson, sufficient time was yet before them to receive his answer.

"This is short notice," said the veteran, holding the pen in his hand, in a suspense that had no object; "not a day to fit one so young for heaven?"

"The royal officers gave Hale [1] but an hour," returned his comrade; "we have granted the usual time. But Washington has the power to extend it, or to pardon."

"Then to Washington will I go," cried the colonel, returning the paper with his signature; "and if the services of an old man like me, or that brave boy of mine, entitle me to his ear, I will yet save the youth."

So saying, he departed, full of his generous intentions in favor of Henry Wharton.

[1] An American officer of this name was detected within the British lines, in disguise, in search of military information. He was tried and executed, as stated in the text, as soon as the preparations could be made. It is said that he was reproached under the gallows with dishonoring the rank he held by his fate. "What a death for an officer to die!" said one of his captors. "Gentlemen, any death is honorable when a man dies in a cause like that of America," was his answer.

André was executed amid the tears of his enemies: Hale died unpitied, and with reproaches in his ears; and yet one was the victim of ambition, and the other of devotion to his country. Posterity will do justice between them.

The sentence of the court was communicated, with proper tenderness, to the prisoner; and after giving a few necessary instructions to the officer in command, and dispatching a courier to headquarters with their report, the remaining judges mounted, and rode to their own quarters, with the same unmoved exterior, but with the consciousness of the same dispassionate integrity, that they had maintained throughout the trial.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Have you no countermand for Claudio yet,
But he must die to-morrow ?

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

A FEW hours were passed by the prisoner, after his sentence was received, in the bosom of his family. Mr Wharton wept in hopeless despondency over the untimely fate of his son; and Frances, after recovering from her insensibility, experienced an anguish of feeling to which the bitterness of death itself would have been comparatively light. Miss Peyton alone retained a vestige of hope, or presence of mind to suggest what might be proper to be done under their circumstances. The comparative composure of the good aunt arose in no degree from any want of interest in the welfare of her nephew, but it was founded in a kind of instinctive dependence on the character of Washington. He was a native of the same colony with herself; and although his early military services, and her frequent visits to the family of her sister, and subsequent establishment at its head, had prevented their ever meeting, still she was familiar with his domestic virtues, and well knew that the rigid inflexibility for which his public acts were distinguished formed no part of his reputation in private life. He was known in Virginia as a consistent but just and lenient master; and she felt a kind of pride in associating in her mind her countryman with the man who led the armies, and in a great measure controlled the destinies, of America. She knew that Henry was innocent of the crime for which he was condemned to suffer, and, with that kind of simple faith that is ever to be found in the most ingenuous characters, could not conceive of those constructions and interpretations of law that

inflicted punishment without the actual existence of crime. But even her confiding hopes were doomed to meet with a speedy termination. Towards noon, a regiment of militia, that was quartered on the banks of the river, moved up to the ground in front of the house that held our heroine and her family, and deliberately pitched their tents, with the avowed intention of remaining until the following morning, to give solemnity and effect to the execution of a British spy.

Dunwoodie had performed all that was required of him by his orders, and was at liberty to retrace his steps to his expecting squadron, which was impatiently waiting his return, to be led against a detachment of the enemy, that was known to be slowly moving up the banks of the river, in order to cover a party of foragers in its rear. He was accompanied by a small party of Lawton's troop, under the expectation that their testimony might be required to convict the prisoner; and Mason, the lieutenant, was in command. But the confession of Captain Wharton had removed the necessity of examining any witnesses on behalf of the people.[1] The major, from an unwillingness to encounter the distress of Henry's friends, and a dread of trusting himself within its influence, had spent the time we have mentioned in walking by himself, in keen anxiety, at a short distance from the dwelling. Like Miss Peyton, he had some reliance on the mercy of Washington, although moments of terrific doubt and despondency were continually crossing his mind. To him the rules of service were familiar, and he was more accustomed to consider his general in the capacity of a ruler, than as exhibiting the characteristics of the individual. A dreadful instance had too recently occurred, which fully proved that Washington was above the weakness of sparing another in mercy to himself. While pacing, with hurried steps, through the orchard, laboring under these constantly recurring doubts, enlivened by transient rays of hope, Mason approached, accoutered completely for the saddle.

[1] In America, justice is administered in the name of "the good people," etc., etc.; the sovereignty residing with them.

"Thinking you might have forgotten the news brought this morning from below, sir, I have taken the liberty to order the detachment under arms," said the lieutenant, very coolly, cutting down with his sheathed sabre the mullein-tops that grew within his reach.

"What news?" cried the major, starting.

"Only that John Bull is out in West-Chester, with a train of wagons, which, if he fills, will compel us to retire through these cursed hills, in search of provender. These greedy Englishmen are so shut up on York Island, that when they do venture out, they seldom leave straw enough to furnish the bed of a Yankee heiress."

"Where did the express leave them, did you say? The intelligence has entirely escaped my memory."

"On the heights above Sing Sing," returned the lieutenant, with no little amazement. "The road below looks like a hay-market, and all the swine are sighing forth their lamentations, as the corn passes them towards King's Bridge. George Singleton's orderly, who brought up the tidings, says that our horses were holding consultation if they should not go down without their riders, and eat another meal, for it is questionable with them whether they can get a full stomach again. If they are suffered to get back with their plunder, we shall not be able to find a piece of pork at Christmas fat enough to fry itself."

"Peace, with all this nonsense of Singleton's orderly, Mr. Mason," cried Dunwoodie, impatiently; "let him learn to wait the orders of his superiors."

"I beg pardon in his name, Major Dunwoodie," said the subaltern; "but, like myself, he was in error. We both thought it was the order of General Heath, to attack and molest the enemy whenever he ventured out of his nest."

"Recollect yourself, Lieutenant Mason," said the major, "or I may have to teach you that your orders pass through me."

"I know it, Major Dunwoodie — I know it; and I am sorry that your memory is so bad as to forget that I never have yeat hesitted to obey them."

"Forgive me, Mason," cried Dunwoodie, taking both his

hands; "I do know you for a brave and obedient soldier; forget my humor. But this business — had you ever a friend!"

"Nay, nay," interrupted the lieutenant; "forgive me and my honest zeal. I knew of the orders, and was fearful that censure might fall on my officer. But remain, and let a man breathe a syllable against the corps, and every sword will start from the scabbard of itself; besides, they are still moving up, and it is a long road from Croton to King's Bridge. Happen what may, I see plainly that we shall be on their heels before they are housed again."

"Oh! that the courier was returned from headquarters!" exclaimed Dunwoodie. "This suspense is insupportable."

"You have your wish," cried Mason; "here he is at the moment, and riding like the bearer of good news. God send it may be so; for I can't say that I particularly like myself to see a brave young fellow dancing upon nothing."

Dunwoodie heard but very little of this feeling declaration; for, ere half of it was uttered, he had leaped the fence, and stood before the messenger.

"What news?" cried the major, the moment that the soldier stopped his horse.

"Good!" exclaimed the man; and feeling no hesitation to intrust an officer so well-known as Major Dunwoodie, he placed the paper in his hands, as he added, "but you can read it, sir, for yourself."

Dunwoodie paused not to read; but flew, with the elastic spring of joy, to the chamber of the prisoner. The sentinel knew him, and he was suffered to pass without question.

"Oh! Peyton," cried Frances, as he entered the apartment, "you look like a messenger from heaven! bring you tidings of mercy?"

"Here, Frances — here, Henry — here, dear cousin Jeanette," cried the youth, as with trembling hands he broke the seal; "here is the letter itself, directed to the captain of the guard. But listen" —

All did listen with intense anxiety; and the pang of blasted hope was added to their misery, as they saw the

glow of delight which had beamed on the countenance of the major give place to a look of horror. The paper contained the sentence of the court, and underneath was written these simple words, —

"Approved — Geo. Washington."

"He's lost, he's lost!" cried Frances, sinking into the arms of her aunt.

"My son! my son!" sobbed the father, "there is mercy in heaven, if there is none on earth. May Washington never want that mercy he thus denies to my innocent child!"

"Washington!" echoed Dunwoodie, gazing around him in vacant horror. "Yes, 'tis the act of Washington himself; these are his characters; his very name is here, to sanction the dreadful deed."

"Cruel, cruel Washington!" cried Miss Peyton; "how has familiarity with blood changed his nature!"

"Blame him not," said Dunwoodie; "it is the general, and not the man; my life on it, he feels the blow he is compelled to inflict."

"I have been deceived in him," cried Frances. "He is not the saviour of his country; but a cold and merciless tyrant. Oh! Peyton, Peyton! how have you misled me in his character!"

"Peace, dear Frances; peace, for God's sake; use not such language. He is but the guardian of the law."

"You speak the truth, Major Dunwoodie," said Henry, recovering from the shock of having his last ray of hope extinguished, and advancing from his seat by the side of his father. "I, who am to suffer, blame him not. Every indulgence has been granted me that I can ask. On the verge of the grave, I cannot continue unjust. At such a moment, with so recent an instance of danger to your cause from treason, I wonder not at Washington's unbending justice. Nothing now remains but to prepare for that fate which so speedily awaits me. To you, Major Dunwoodie, I make my first request."

"Name it," said the major, giving utterance with difficulty.

Henry turned, and pointing to the group of weeping mourners near him, he continued, —

"Be a son to this aged man; help his weakness, and defend him from any usage to which the stigma thrown upon me may subject him. He has not many friends amongst the rulers of this country; let your powerful name be found among them."

"It shall."

"And this helpless innocent," continued Henry, pointing to where Sarah sat, unconscious of what was passing, "I had hoped for an opportunity to revenge her wrongs;" a flush of excitement passed over his features; "but such thoughts are evil — I feel them to be wrong. Under your care, Peyton, she will find sympathy and refuge."

"She shall," whispered Dunwoodie.

"This good aunt has claims upon you already; of her I will not speak; but here," taking the hand of Frances, and dwelling upon her countenance with an expression of fraternal affection, "here is the choicest gift of all. Take her to your bosom, and cherish her as you would cultivate innocence and virtue."

The major could not repress the eagerness with which he extended his hand to receive the precious boon; but Frances, shrinking from his touch, hid her face in the bosom of her aunt.

"No, no, no!" she murmured; "none can ever be anything to me who aid in my brother's destruction."

Henry continued gazing at her in tender pity for several moments, before he again resumed a discourse that all felt was most peculiarly his own.

"I have been mistaken, then. I did think, Peyton, that your worth, your noble devotion to a cause that you have been taught to revere, that your kindness to our father when in imprisonment, your friendship for me, — in short, that your character was understood and valued by my sister."

"It is — it is," whispered Frances, burying her face still deeper in the bosom of her aunt.

"I believe, dear Henry," said Dunwoodie, "this is a subject that had better not be dwelt upon now."

"You forget," returned the prisoner, with a faint smile, "how much I have to do, and how little time is left to do it in."

"I apprehend," continued the major, with a face of fire, "that Miss Wharton has imbibed some opinions of me that would make a compliance with your request irksome to her — opinions that it is now too late to alter."

"No, no, no," cried Frances, quickly; "you are exonerated, Peyton — with her dying breath she removed my doubts."

"Generous Isabella!" murmured Dunwoodie; "but still, Henry, spare your sister now; nay, spare even me."

"I speak in pity to myself," returned the brother, gently removing Frances from the arms of her aunt. "What a time is this to leave two such lovely females without a protector! Their abode is destroyed, and misery will speedily deprive them of their last male friend," looking at his father; "can I die in peace with the knowledge of the danger to which they will be exposed?"

"You forget me," said Miss Peyton, shrinking at the idea of celebrating nuptials at such a moment.

"No, my dear aunt, I forget you not, nor shall I, until I cease to remember; but you forget the times and the danger. The good woman who lives in this house has already dispatched a messenger for a man of God, to smooth my passage to another world. Frances, if you would wish me to die in peace, to feel a security that will allow me to turn my whole thoughts to heaven, you will let this clergyman unite you to Dunwoodie."

Frances shook her head, but remained silent.

"I ask for no joy — no demonstration of a felicity that you will not, cannot feel, for months to come; but obtain a right to his powerful name — give him an undisputed title to protect you" —

Again the maid made an impressive gesture of denial.

"For the sake of that unconscious sufferer" — pointing to Sarah, "for your sake — for my sake — my sister" —

"Peace, Henry, or you will break my heart," cried the agitated girl; "not for worlds would I at such a moment engage in the solemn vows that you wish. It would render me miserable for life."

"You love him not," said Henry, reproachfully. "I cease to importune you to do what is against your inclinations."

Frances raised one hand to conceal her countenance, as she extended the other towards Dunwoodie, and said earnestly, —

"Now you are unjust to me — before, you were unjust to yourself."

"Promise me, then," said Wharton, musing awhile in silence, "that as soon as the recollection of my fate is softened, you will give my friend that hand for life, and I am satisfied."

"I do promise," said Frances, withdrawing the hand that Dunwoodie delicately relinquished, without even presuming to press it to his lips.

"Well, then, my good aunt," continued Henry, "will you leave me for a short time alone with my friend? I have a few melancholy commissions with which to intrust him, and would spare you and my sister the pain of hearing them."

"There is yet time to see Washington again," said Miss Peyton, moving towards the door; and then, speaking with extreme dignity, she continued, "I will go myself: surely he must listen to a woman from his own colony! — and we are in some degree connected with his family."

"Why not apply to Mr. Harper?" said Frances, recollecting the parting words of their guest for the first time.

"Harper!" echoed Dunwoodie, turning towards her with the swiftness of lightning; "what of him? do you know him?"

"It is in vain," said Henry, drawing him aside; "Frances clings to hope with the fondness of a sister. Retire, my love, and leave me with my friend."

But Frances read an expression in the eye of Dunwoodie that chained her to the spot. After struggling to command her feelings, she continued, —

"He stayed with us for two days — he was with us when Henry was arrested."

"And — and — did you know him?"

"Nay," continued Frances, catching her breath as she witnessed the intense interest of her lover, "we knew him not; he came to us in the night, a stranger, and remained with us during the severe storm; but he seemed to take an interest in Henry, and promised him his friendship."

"What!" exclaimed the youth, in astonishment; "did he know your brother?"

"Certainly; it was at his request that Henry threw aside his disguise."

"But," said Dunwoodie, turning pale with suspense, "he knew him not as an officer of the royal army?"

"Indeed he did," cried Miss Peyton; "and he cautioned us against this very danger."

Dunwoodie caught up the fatal paper, that still lay where it had fallen from his own hands, and studied its characters intently. Something seemed to bewilder his brain. He passed his hand over his forehead, while each eye was fixed on him in dreadful suspense — all feeling afraid to admit those hopes anew that had once been so sadly destroyed.

"What said he? what promised he?" at length Dunwoodie asked, with feverish impatience.

"He bid Henry apply to him when in danger, and promised to requite the son for the hospitality of the father."

"Said he this, knowing him to be a British officer?"

"Most certainly; and with a view to this very danger."

"Then," cried the youth aloud, and yielding to his rapture, "then you are safe — then will I save him; yes, Harper will never forget his word."

"But has he the power?" said Frances; "can he move the stubborn purpose of Washington?"

"Can he! If he cannot," shouted the youth, "if he cannot, who can? Greene, and Heath, and young Hamilton are nothing, compared to this Harper. But," rushing to his mistress, and pressing her hands convulsively, "repeat to me — you say you have his promise?"

"Surely, surely, Peyton; his solemn, deliberate promise, knowing all of the circumstances."

"Rest easy," cried Dunwoodie, holding her to his bosom for a moment, "rest easy, for Henry is safe."

He waited not to explain, but darting from the room, he left the family in amazement. They continued in silent wonder until they heard the feet of his charger, as he dashed from the door with the speed of an arrow.

A long time was spent after this abrupt departure of the youth, by the anxious friends he had left, in discussing the probability of his success. The confidence of his manner had, however, communicated to his auditors something of his own spirit. Each felt that the prospects of Henry were again brightening, and with their reviving hopes they experienced a renewal of spirits, which in all but Henry himself amounted to pleasure: with him, indeed, his state was too awful to admit of trifling, and for a few hours he was condemned to feel how much more intolerable was suspense than even the certainty of calamity. Not so with Frances. She, with all the reliance of affection, reposed in security on the assurance of Dunwoodie, without harassing herself with doubts that she possessed not the means of satisfying; but believing her lover able to accomplish everything that man could do, and retaining a vivid recollection of the manner and benevolent appearance of Harper, she abandoned herself to all the felicity of renovated hope.

The joy of Miss Peyton was more sobered, and she took frequent occasions to reprove her niece for the exuberance of her spirits, before there was a certainty that their expectations were to be realized. But the slight smile that hovered around the lips of the virgin contradicted the very sobriety of feeling that she inculcated.

"Why, dearest aunt," said Frances, playfully, in reply to one of her frequent reprimands, "would you have me repress the pleasure that I feel at Henry's deliverance, when you yourself have so often declared it to be impossible that such men as ruled in our country could sacrifice an innocent man."

"Nay, I did believe it impossible, my child, and yet think so; but still there is a discretion to be shown in joy as well as in sorrow."

Frances recollected the declaration of Isabella, and turned an eye filled with tears of gratitude on her excellent aunt, as she replied, —

"True: but there are feelings that will not yield to reason. Ah! here are those monsters, who have come to witness the death of a fellow-creature, moving around yon field, as if life was, to them, nothing but a military show."

"It is but little more to the hireling soldier," said Henry, endeavoring to forget his uneasiness.

"You gaze, my love, as if you thought a military show of some importance," said Miss Peyton, observing her niece to be looking from the window with a fixed and abstracted attention. But Frances answered not.

From the window where she stood, the pass that they had travelled through the Highlands was easily to be seen; and the mountain which held on its summit the mysterious hut was directly before her. Its side was rugged and barren; huge and apparently impassable barriers of rocks presenting themselves through the stunted oaks, which, stripped of their foliage, were scattered over its surface. The base of the hill was not half a mile from the house, and the object which attracted the notice of Frances was the figure of a man emerging from behind a rock of remarkable formation, and as suddenly disappearing. This manœuvre was several times repeated, as if it were the intention of the fugitive (for such by his air he seemed to be) to reconnoitre the proceedings of the soldiery, and assure himself of the position of things on the plain. Notwithstanding the distance, Frances instantly imbibed the opinion that it was Birch. Perhaps this impression was partly owing to the air and figure of the man, but in a great measure to the idea that presented itself on formerly beholding the object at the summit of the mountain. That they were the same figure she was confident, although this wanted the appearance which, in the other, she had taken for the pack of the pedler. Harvey had so connected himself with the mysterious deportment of Harper, within her imagination, that, under circumstances of less agitation than those in which she had labored since her arrival, she would have kept her suspicions

to herself. Frances, therefore, sat ruminating on this second appearance in silence, and endeavoring to trace what possible connection this extraordinary man could have with the fortunes of her own family. He had certainly saved Sarah, in some degree, from the blow that had partially alighted on her, and in no instance had he proved himself to be hostile to their interests.

After gazing for a long time at the point where she had last seen the figure, in the vain expectation of its reappearance, she turned to her friends in the apartment. Miss Peyton was sitting by Sarah, who gave some slight additional signs of observing what passed, but who still continued insensible either to joy or grief.

"I suppose, by this time, my love, that you are well acquainted with the manœuvres of a regiment," said Miss Peyton; "it is no bad quality in a soldier's wife, at all events."

"I am not a wife yet," said Frances, coloring to the eyes; "and we have little reason to wish for another wedding in our family."

"Frances!" exclaimed her brother, starting from his seat, and pacing the floor in violent agitation, "touch not the chord again, I entreat you. While my fate is uncertain, I would wish to be at peace with all men."

"Then let the uncertainty cease," cried Frances, springing to the door, "for here comes Peyton with the joyful intelligence of your release."

The words were hardly uttered, before the door opened, and the major entered. In his air there was the appearance of neither success nor defeat, but there was a marked display of vexation. He took the hand that Frances, in the fullness of her heart, extended towards him, but instantly relinquishing it, threw himself into a chair, in evident fatigue.

"You have failed," said Wharton, with a bound of his heart, but an appearance of composure.

"Have you seen Harper?" cried Frances, turning pale.

"I have not; I crossed the river in one boat as he must have been coming to this side, in another. I returned

without delay, and traced him for several miles into the Highlands, by the western pass, but there I unaccountably lost him. I have returned here to relieve your uneasiness; but see him I will this night, and bring a respite for Henry.'

"But saw you Washington?" asked Miss Peyton.

Dunwoodie gazed at her a moment in abstracted musing, and the question was repeated. He answered gravely, and with some reserve, —

"The commander-in-chief had left his quarters."

"But, Peyton," cried Frances, in returning terror, "if they should not see each other, it will be too late. Harper alone will not be sufficient."

Her lover turned his eyes slowly on her anxious countenance, and dwelling a moment on her features, said, still musing, —

"You say that he promised to assist Henry."

"Certainly, of his own accord, and in requital for the hospitality he had received."

Dunwoodie shook his head, and began to look grave.

"I like not that word hospitality — it has an empty sound; there must be something more reasonable to tie Harper. I dread some mistake: repeat to me all that passed."

Frances, in a hurried and earnest voice, complied with his request. She related particularly the manner of his arrival at the Locusts, the reception that he received, and the events that passed, as minutely as her memory could supply her with the means. As she alluded to the conversation that occurred between her father and his guest, the major smiled, but remained silent. She then gave a detail of Henry's arrival, and the events of the following day. She dwelt upon the part where Harper had desired her brother to throw aside his disguise, and recounted, with wonderful accuracy, his remarks upon the hazard of the step that the youth had taken. She even remembered a remarkable expression of his to her brother, "that he was safer from Harper's knowledge of his person, than he would be without it." Frances mentioned, with the warmth of

youthful admiration, the benevolent character of his deportment to herself, and gave a minute relation of his adieus to the whole family.

Dunwoodie at first listened with grave attention; evident satisfaction followed as she proceeded. When she spoke of herself, in connection with their guest, he smiled with pleasure, and as she concluded, he exclaimed, with delight, —

"We are safe! — we are safe!"

But he was interrupted, as will be seen in the following chapter

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The owlet loves the gloom of night,
The lark salutes the day,
The timid dove will coo at hand —
But falcons soar away.

SONG IN DUO.

IN a country settled, like these States, by a people who fled their native land and much-loved firesides, victims of consciences and religious zeal, none of the decencies and solemnities of a Christian death are dispensed with, when circumstances will admit of their exercise. The good woman of the house was a strict adherent to the forms of the church to which she belonged; and having herself been awakened to a sense of her depravity, by the ministry of the divine who harangued the people of the adjoining parish, she thought it was from his exhortations only that salvation could be meted out to the short-lived hopes of Henry Wharton. Not that the kind-hearted matron was so ignorant of the doctrines of the religion which she professed, as to depend, theoretically, on mortal aid for protection; but she had, to use her own phrase, "sat so long under the preaching of good Mr. ——," that she had unconsciously imbibed a practical reliance on his assistance, for that which her faith should have taught her could come from the Deity alone. With her, the consideration of death was at all times awful; and the instant that the sentence of the prisoner was promulgated, she dispatched Cæsar, mounted on one of her husband's best horses, in quest of her clerical monitor. This step had been taken without consulting either Henry or his friends; and it was only when the services of Cæsar were required on some domestic emergency, that she explained the nature of his absence. The youth heard her, at first, with an unconquer-

able reluctance to admit of such a spiritual guide; but as our view of the things of this life becomes less vivid, our prejudices and habits cease to retain their influence; and a civil bow of thanks was finally given, in requital for the considerate care of the well-meaning woman.

The black returned early from his expedition, and, as well as could be gathered from his somewhat incoherent narrative, a minister of God might be expected to arrive in the course of the day. The interruption that we mentioned in our preceding chapter was occasioned by the entrance of the landlady. At the intercession of Dunwoodie, orders had been given to the sentinel who guarded the door of Henry's room, that the members of the prisoner's family should, at all times, have free access to his apartment: Cæsar was included in this arrangement, as a matter of convenience, by the officer in command; but strict inquiry and examination was made into the errand of every other applicant for admission. The major had, however, included himself among the relatives of the British officer; and one pledge, that no rescue should be attempted, was given in his name, for them all. A short conversation was passing between the woman of the house and the corporal of the guard, before the door that the sentinel had already opened in anticipation of the decision of his non-commissioned commandant.

"Would you refuse the consolations of religion to a fellow-creature about to suffer death?" said the matron, with earnest zeal. "Would you plunge a soul into the fiery furnace, and a minister at hand to point out the strait and narrow path?"

"I'll tell you what, good woman," returned the corporal, gently pushing her away; "I've no notion of my back being a highway for any man to walk to heaven upon. A pretty figure I should make at the pickets, for disobeying orders. Just step down and ask Lieutenant Mason, and you may bring in a whole congregation. We have not taken the guard from the foot-soldiers, but an hour, and I shouldn't like to have it said that we know less of our duty than the militia."

"Admit the woman," said Dunwoodie, sternly, observing, for the first time, that one of his own corps was on post.

The corporal raised his hand to his cap, and fell back in silence; the soldier stood to his arms, and the matron entered.

"Here is a reverend gentleman below, come to soothe the parting soul, in the place of our own divine, who is engaged with an appointment that could not be put aside; 'tis to bury old Mr. ——."

"Show him in," said Henry, with feverish impatience.

"But will the sentinel let him pass? I would not wish a friend of Mr. —— to be rudely stopped on the threshold, and he a stranger."

All eyes were now turned on Dunwoodie, who, looking at his watch, spoke a few words with Henry, in an undertone, and hastened from the apartment, followed by Frances. The subject of their conversation was a wish expressed by the prisoner for a clergyman of his own persuasion, and a promise from the major, that one should be sent from Fishkill town, through which he was about to pass, on his way to the ferry to intercept the expected return of Harper. Mason soon made his bow at the door, and willingly complied with the wishes of the landlady; and the divine was invited to make his appearance accordingly.

The person who was ushered into the apartment, preceded by Cæsar, and followed by the matron, was a man beyond the middle age, or who might rather be said to approach the downhill of life. In stature he was above the size of ordinary men, though his excessive leanness might contribute in deceiving as to his height; his countenance was sharp and unbending, and every muscle seemed set in rigid compression. No joy or relaxation appeared ever to have dwelt on features that frowned habitually, as if in detestation of the vices of mankind. The brows were beetling, dark, and forbidding, giving the promise of eyes of no less repelling expression; but the organs were concealed beneath a pair of enormous green goggles, through which they glared around with a fierceness that denounced the coming day of wrath. All was fanaticism, uncharitable-

ness, and denunciation. Long, lank hair, a mixture of gray and black, fell down his neck, and in some degree obscured the sides of his face, and, parting on his forehead, fell in either direction in straight and formal screens. On the top of this ungraceful exhibition was laid, impending forward, so as to overhang in some measure the whole fabric, a large hat of three equal cocks. His coat was of a rusty black, and his breeches and stockings were of the same color; his shoes without lustre, and half concealed beneath huge plated buckles.

He stalked into the room, and giving a stiff nod with his head, took the chair offered him by the black, in dignified silence. For several minutes no one broke this ominous pause in the conversation; Henry feeling a repugnance to his guest, that he was vainly endeavoring to conquer, and the stranger himself drawing forth occasional sighs and groans, that threatened a dissolution of the unequal connection between his sublimated soul and its ungainly tenement. During this deathlike preparation, Mr. Wharton, with a feeling nearly allied to that of his son, led Sarah from the apartment. His retreat was noticed by the divine, in a kind of scornful disdain, who began to hum the air of a popular psalm tune, giving it the full richness of the twang that distinguishes the Eastern [1] psalmody.

"Cæsar," said Miss Peyton, "hand the gentleman some refreshment; he must need it after his ride."

"My strength is not in the things of this life," said the divine, speaking in a hollow, sepulchral voice. "Thrice have I this day held forth in my master's service, and fainted not; still it is prudent to help this frail tenement of clay, for, surely, 'the laborer is worthy of his hire.'"

Opening a pair of enormous jaws, he took a good measure of the proffered brandy, and suffered it to glide downwards, with that sort of facility with which man is prone to sin.

"I apprehend, then, sir, that fatigue will disable you from performing the duties which kindness has induced you to attempt."

[1] By "Eastern" is meant the States of New England, which, being originally settled by Puritans, still retain many distinct shades of character.

"Woman!" exclaimed the stranger, with energy, "when was I ever known to shrink from a duty? But 'judge not, lest ye be judged,' and fancy not that it is given to mortal eyes to fathom the intentions of the Deity."

"Nay," returned the maiden, meekly, and slightly disgusted with his jargon, "I pretend not to judge of either events, or the intentions of my fellow-creatures, much less of those of Omnipotence."

"'Tis well, woman — 'tis well," cried the minister, moving his head with supercilious disdain; "humility becometh thy sex, and lost condition; thy weakness driveth thee on headlong, like 'unto the besom of destruction.'"

Surprised at this extraordinary deportment, but yielding to that habit which urges us to speak reverently on sacred subjects, even when perhaps we had better continue silent, Miss Peyton replied, —

"There is a power above, that can and will sustain us all in well-doing, if we seek its support in humility and truth."

The stranger turned a lowering look at the speaker, and then composing himself into an air of self-abasement, he continued in the same repelling tones, —

"It is not every one that crieth out for mercy, that will be heard. The ways of Providence are not to be judged by men — 'Many are called, but few chosen.' It is easier to talk of humility than to feel it. Are you so humble, vile worm, as to wish to glorify God by your own damnation? If not, away with you for a publican and a Pharisee!"

Such gross fanaticism was uncommon in America, and Miss Peyton began to imbibe the impression that her guest was deranged; but remembering that he had been sent by a well-known divine, and one of reputation, she discarded the idea, and, with some forbearance, observed, —

"I may deceive myself, in believing that mercy is proffered to all, but it is so soothing a doctrine, that I would not willingly be undeceived."

"Mercy is only for the elect," cried the stranger, with an unaccountable energy; "and you are in the 'valley of the shadow of death.' Are you not a follower of idle

ceremonies, which belong to the vain church that our tyrants would gladly establish here, along with their stamp-acts and tea-laws? Answer me that, woman; and remember, that Heaven hears your answer: are you not of that idolatrous communion?"

"I worship at the altars of my fathers," said Miss Peyton, motioning to Henry for silence; "but bow to no other idol than my own infirmities."

"Yes, yes, I know ye, self-righteous and papal as ye are — followers of forms, and listeners to bookish preaching; think you, woman, that holy Paul had notes in his hand to propound the word to the believers?"

"My presence disturbs you," said Miss Peyton, rising: "I will leave you with my nephew, and offer those prayers in private that I did wish to mingle with his."

So saying, she withdrew, followed by the landlady, who was not a little shocked, and somewhat surprised, by the intemperate zeal of her new acquaintance; for, although the good woman believed that Miss Peyton and her whole church were on the high road to destruction, she was by no means accustomed to hear such offensive and open avowals of their fate.

Henry had with difficulty repressed the indignation excited by this unprovoked attack on his meek and unresisting aunt; but as the door closed on her retiring figure, he gave way to his feelings.

"I must confess, sir," he exclaimed with heat, "that in receiving a minister of God, I thought I was admitting a Christian; and one who, by feeling his own weaknesses, knew how to pity the frailties of others. You have wounded the meek spirit of an excellent woman, and I acknowledge but little inclination to mingle in prayer with so intolerant a spirit."

The minister stood erect, with grave composure, following with his eyes, in a kind of scornful pity, the retiring females, and suffered the expostulation of the youth to be given, as if unworthy of his notice. A third voice, however, spoke, —

"Such a denunciation would have driven many women

into fits; but it has answered the purpose well enough, as it is."

"Who's that?" cried the prisoner, in amazement, gazing around the room in quest of the speaker.

"It is I, Captain Wharton," said Harvey Birch, removing the spectacles, and exhibiting his piercing eyes, shining under a pair of false eyebrows.

"Good Heavens — Harvey!"

"Silence!" said the pedler, solemnly; "'tis a name not to be mentioned, and least of all here, within the heart of the American army." Birch paused and gazed around him for a moment, with an emotion exceeding the base passion of fear, and then continued in a gloomy tone, "There are a thousand halters in that very name, and little hope would there be left me of another escape, should I be again taken. This is a fearful venture that I am making; but I could not sleep in quiet, and know that an innocent man was about to die the death of a dog, when I might save him."

"No," said Henry, with a glow of generous feeling on his cheek; "if the risk to yourself be so heavy, retire as you came, and leave me to my fate. Dunwoodie is making, even now, powerful exertions in my behalf; and if he meets with Mr. Harper in the course of the night, my liberation is certain."

"Harper!" echoed the pedler, remaining with his hands raised, in the act of replacing the spectacles; "what do you know of Harper? and why do you think he will do you service?"

"I have his promise; you remember our recent meeting in my father's dwelling, and he then gave an unasked promise to assist me."

"Yes — but do you know him? that is — why do you think he has the power? or what reason have you for believing he will remember his word?"

"If there ever was the stamp of truth, or simple, honest benevolence, in the countenance of man, it shone in his," said Henry; "besides, Dunwoodie has powerful friends in the rebel army, and it would be better that I take the chance where I am, than thus to expose you to certain death, if detected."

"Captain Wharton," said Birch, looking guardedly around, and speaking with impressive seriousness of manner, "if I fail you, all fail you. No Harper nor Dunwoodie can save your life; unless you get out with me, and that within the hour, you die to-morrow on the gallows of a murderer. Yes, such are their laws; the man who fights, and kills, and plunders, is honored; but he who serves his country as a spy, no matter how faithfully, no matter how honestly, lives to be reviled, or dies like the vilest criminal!"

"You forget, Mr. Birch," said the youth, a little indignantly, "that I am not a treacherous, lurking spy, who deceives to betray; but innocent of the charge imputed to me."

The blood rushed over the pale, meagre features of the pedler, until his face was one glow of fire; but it passed quickly away, and he replied, —

"I have told you truth. Cæsar met me, as he was going on his errand this morning, and with him I have laid the plan which, if executed as I wish, will save you — otherwise you are lost; and I again tell you, that no other power on earth, not even Washington, can save you."

"I submit," said the prisoner, yielding to his earnest manner, and goaded by the fears that were thus awakened anew.

The pedler beckoned him to be silent, and walking to the door, opened it, with the stiff, formal air with which he had entered the apartment.

"Friend, let no one enter," he said to the sentinel; "we are about to go to prayer, and would wish to be alone."

"I don't know that any will wish to interrupt you," returned the soldier, with a waggish leer of his eye; "but, should they be so disposed, I have no power to stop them, if they be of the prisoner's friends; I have my orders, and must mind them, whether the Englishman goes to heaven, or not."

"Audacious sinner!" said the pretended priest, "have you not the fear of God before your eyes! I tell you, as you will dread punishment at the last day, to let none of

the idolatrous communion enter, to mingle in the prayers of the righteous."

"Whew-ew-ew — what a noble commander you'd make for Sergeant Hollister! you'd preach him dumb in a roll-call. Harkee, I'll thank you not to make such a noise when you hold forth, as to drown our bugles, or you may get a poor fellow a short horn at his grog, for not turning out to the evening parade: if you want to be alone, have you no knife to stick over the door-latch, that you must have a troop of horse to guard your meeting-house?"

The pedler took the hint, and closed the door immediately, using the precaution suggested by the dragoon.

"You overact your part," said young Wharton, in constant apprehension of discovery; "your zeal is too intemperate."

"For a foot-soldier and them Eastern militia, it might be," said Harvey, turning a bag upside down, that Cæsar now handed him; "but these dragoons are fellows that you must brag down. A faint heart, Captain Wharton, would do but little here; but come, here is a black shroud for your good-looking countenance," taking, at the same time, a parchment mask, and fitting it to the face of Henry. "The master and the man must change places for a season."

"I don't t'ink he look a bit like me," said Cæsar, with disgust, as he surveyed his young master with his new complexion.

"Stop a minute, Cæsar," said the pedler, with the lurking drollery that at times formed part of his manner, "till we get on the wool."

"He worse than ebber now," cried the discontented African. "A t'ink colored man like a sheep! I nebber see sich a lip, Harvey; he most as big as a sausage!"

Great pains had been taken in forming the different articles used in the disguise of Captain Wharton, and when arranged, under the skillful superintendence of the pedler, they formed together a transformation that would easily escape detection, from any but an extraordinary observer.

The mask was stuffed and shaped in such a manner as to preserve the peculiarities, as well as the color, of the

African visage; and the wig was so artfully formed of black and white wool, as to imitate the pepper-and-salt color of Cæsar's own head, and to exact plaudits from the black himself, who thought it an excellent counterfeit in everything but quality.

"There is but one man in the American army who could detect you, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, surveying his work with satisfaction, "and he is just now out of our way."

"And who is he?"

"The man who made you prisoner. He would see your white skin through a plank. But strip, both of you; your clothes must be exchanged from head to foot."

Cæsar, who had received minute instructions from the pedler in their morning interview, immediately commenced throwing aside his coarse garments, which the youth took up and prepared to invest himself with; unable, however, to repress a few signs of loathing.

In the manner of the pedler there was an odd mixture of care and humor; the former was the result of a perfect knowledge of their danger, and the means necessary to be used in avoiding it; and the latter proceeded from the unavoidably ludicrous circumstances before him, acting on an indifference which sprung from habit, and long familiarity with such scenes as the present.

"Here, captain," he said, taking up some loose wool, and beginning to stuff the stockings of Cæsar, which were already on the leg of the prisoner; "some judgment is necessary in shaping this limb. You will have to display it on horseback; and the southern dragoons are so used to the brittle-shins, that should they notice your well-turned calf, they'd know at once it never belonged to a black."

"Golly!" said Cæsar, with a chuckle, that exhibited a mouth open from ear to ear, "Massa Harry breeches fit."

"Anything but your leg," said the pedler, coolly pursuing the toilet of Henry. "Slip on the coat, captain, over all. Upon my word, you'd pass well at a pinkster

frolic; and here, Cæsar, place this powdered wig over your curls, and be careful and look out of the window, whenever the door is open, and on no account speak, or you will betray all."

"I s'pose Harvey t'ink a colored man ain't got a tongue like oder folk," grumbled the black, as he took the station assigned to him.

Everything now was arranged for action, and the pedler very deliberately went over the whole of his injunctions to the two actors in the scene. The captain he conjured to dispense with his erect military carriage, and for a season to adopt the humble paces of his father's negro; and Cæsar he enjoined to silence and disguise, so long as he could possibly maintain them. Thus prepared, he opened the door, and called aloud to the sentinel, who had retired to the farthest end of the passage, in order to avoid receiving any of that spiritual comfort, which he felt was the sole property of another.

"Let the woman of the house be called," said Harvey, in the solemn key of his assumed character; "and let her come alone. The prisoner is in a happy train of meditation, and must not be led from his devotions."

Cæsar sunk his face between his hands; and when the soldier looked into the apartment, he thought he saw his charge in deep abstraction. Casting a glance of huge contempt at the divine, he called aloud for the good woman of the house. She hastened at the summons, with earnest zeal, entertaining a secret hope that she was to be admitted to the gossip of a death-bed repentance.

"Sister," said the minister, in the authoritative tones of a master, "have you in the house 'The Christian Criminal's last Moments, or Thoughts on Eternity, for them who die a violent Death'?"

"I never heard of the book!" said the matron in astonishment.

"'Tis not unlikely; there are many books you have never heard of: it is impossible for this poor penitent to pass in peace, without the consolations of that volume.

One hour's reading in it, is worth an age of man's preaching."

"Bless me, what a treasure to possess! — when was it put out?"

"It was first put out at Geneva in the Greek language, and then translated at Boston. It is a book, woman, that should be in the hands of every Christian, especially such as die upon the gallows. Have a horse prepared instantly for this black, who shall accompany me to my brother ——, and I will send down the volume yet in season. Brother, compose thy mind; you are now in the narrow path to glory."

Cæsar wriggled a little in his chair, but he had sufficient recollection to conceal his face with hands that were, in their turn, concealed by gloves. The landlady departed, to comply with this very reasonable request, and the group of conspirators were again left to themselves.

"This is well," said the pedler; "but the difficult task is to deceive the officer who commands the guard — he is lieutenant to Lawton, and has learned some of the captain's own cunning in these things. Remember, Captain Wharton," continued he with an air of pride, "that now is the moment when everything depends on our coolness."

"My fate can be made but little worse than it is at present, my worthy fellow," said Henry; "but for your sake I will do all that in me lies."

"And wherein can I be more forlorn and persecuted than I now am?" asked the pedler, with that wild incoherence which often crossed his manner. "But I have promised *one* to save you, and to him I have never yet broken my word."

"And who is he?" said Henry, with awakened interest.

"No one."

The man soon returned, and announced that the horses were at the door. Harvey gave the captain a glance, and led the way down the stairs, first desiring the woman to leave the prisoner to himself, in order that he might

digest the wholesome mental food that he had so lately received.

A rumor of the odd character of the priest had spread from the sentinel at the door to his comrades; so that when Harvey and Wharton reached the open space before the building, they found a dozen idle dragoons loitering about, with the waggish intention of quizzing the fanatic, and employed in affected admiration of the steeds.

"A fine horse!" said the leader in this plan of mischief; "but a little low in flesh; I suppose from hard labor in your calling."

"My calling may be laborsome to both myself and this faithful beast, but then a day of settling is at hand, that will reward me for all my outgoings and incomings," said Birch, putting his foot in the stirrup, and preparing to mount.

"You work for pay, then, as we fight for't?" cried another of the party.

"Even so — 'is not the laborer worthy of his hire?'"

"Come, suppose you give us a little preaching; we have a leisure moment just now, and there's no telling how much good you might do a set of reprobates like us, in a few words; here, mount this horseblock, and take your text where you please."

The men now gathered in eager delight around the pedler, who, glancing his eye expressively towards the captain, who had been suffered to mount, replied, —

"Doubtless, for such is my duty. But, Cæsar, you can ride up the road and deliver the note — the unhappy prisoner will be wanting the book, for his hours are numbered."

"Aye, aye, go along, Cæsar, and get the book," shouted half a dozen voices, all crowding eagerly around the ideal priest, in anticipation of a frolic.

The pedler inwardly dreaded, that, in their unceremonious handling of himself and garments, his hat and wig might be displaced, when detection would be certain; he was therefore fain to comply with their request. Ascending the horseblock, after hemming once or twice, and

casting several glances at the captain, who continued immovable, he commenced as follows: —

"I shall call your attention, my brethren, to that portion of Scripture which you will find in the second book of Samuel, and which is written in the following words: 'And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.' Cæsar, ride forward, I say, and obtain the book as directed; thy master is groaning in spirit even now for the want of it."

"An excellent text!" cried the dragoons. "Go on — go on — let the snowball stay; he wants to be edified as well as another."

"What are you at there, scoundrels?" cried Lieutenant Mason, as he came in sight from a walk he had taken to sneer at the evening parade of the regiment of militia; "away with every man of you to your quarters, and let me find that each horse is cleaned and littered, when I come round." The sound of the officer's voice operated like a charm, and no priest could desire a more silent congregation, although he might possibly have wished for one that was more numerous. Mason had not done speaking, when it was reduced to the image of Cæsar only. The pedler took that opportunity to mount, but he had to preserve the gravity of his movements, for the remark of the troopers upon the condition of their beasts was but too just, and a dozen dragoon horses stood saddled and bridled at hand, ready to receive their riders at a moment's warning.

"Well, have you bitted the poor fellow within," said Mason, "that he can take his last ride under the curb of divinity, old gentleman?"

"There is evil in thy conversation, profane man," cried the priest, raising his hands and casting his eyes upwards in holy horror; "so I will depart from thee unhurt, as Daniel was liberated from the lions' den."

"Off with you, for a hypocritical, psalm-singing, cant

ing rogue in disguise," said Mason, scornfully; "by the life of Washington! it worries an honest fellow to see such voracious beasts of prey ravaging a country for which he sheds his blood. If I had you on a Virginia plantation for a quarter of an hour, I'd teach you to worm the tobacco with the turkeys."

"I leave you, and shake the dust off my shoes, that no remnant of this wicked hole may tarnish the vestments of the godly."

"Start, or I will shake the dust from your jacket, designing knave! A fellow to be preaching to my men! There's Hollister put the devil in them by his exhorting; the rascals were getting too conscientious to strike a blow that would rase the skin. But hold! whither do you travel, Master Blackey, in such godly company?"

"He goes," said the minister, hastily speaking for his companion, "to return with a book of much condolence and virtue to the sinful youth above, whose soul will speedily become white, even as his outwards are black and unseemly. Would you deprive a dying man of the consolation of religion?"

"No, no, poor fellow, his fate is bad enough; a famous good breakfast his prim body of an aunt gave us. But harkee, Mr. Revelation, if the youth must die *secundum artem*, let it be under a gentleman's directions; and my advice is, that you never trust that skeleton of yours among us again, or I will take the skin off and leave you naked."

"Out upon thee for a reviler and scoffer of goodness!" said Birch, moving slowly, and with a due observance of clerical dignity, down the road, followed by the imaginary Cæsar; "but I leave thee, and that behind me that will prove thy condemnation, and take from thee a hearty and joyful deliverance."

"Damn him," muttered the trooper; "the fellow rides like a stake, and his legs stick out like the cocks of his hat. I wish I had him below these hills, where the law is not over-particular, I'd" —

"Corporal of the guard! — corporal of the guard!'

shouted the sentinel in the passage to the chambers, "corporal of the guard! — corporal of the guard!"

The subaltern flew up the narrow stairway that led to the room of the prisoner, and demanded the meaning of the outcry.

The soldier was standing at the open door of the apartment, looking in with a suspicious eye on the supposed British officer. On observing his lieutenant, he fell back with habitual respect, and replied, with an air of puzzled thought, —

"I don't know, sir; but just now the prisoner looked queer. Ever since the preacher has left him, he don't look as he used to do — but," gazing intently over the shoulder of his officer, "it must be him, too! There is the same powdered head, and the darn in the coat, where he was hit the day we had the last brush with the enemy."

"And then all this noise is occasioned by your doubting whether that poor gentleman is your prisoner, or not, is it, sirrah? Who the devil do you think it can be, else?"

"I don't know who else it can be," returned the fellow, sullenly; "but he has grown thicker and shorter, if it is he; and see for yourself, sir, he shakes all over, like a man in an ague."

This was but too true. Cæsar was an alarmed auditor of this short conversation, and, from congratulating himself upon the dexterous escape of his young master, his thoughts were very naturally beginning to dwell upon the probable consequences to his own person. The pause that succeeded the last remark of the sentinel, in no degree contributed to the restoration of his faculties. Lieutenant Mason was busied in examining with his own eyes the suspected person of the black, and Cæsar was aware of the fact, by stealing a look through a passage under one of his arms, that he had left expressly for the purpose of reconnoitering. Captain Lawton would have discovered the fraud immediately, but Mason was by no means so quick-sighted as his commander. He therefore turned rather contemptuously to the soldier, and, speaking in an undertone, observed, —

"That anabaptist, methodistical, quaker, psalm-singing rascal has frightened the boy, with his farrago about flames and brimstone. I'll step in and cheer him with a little rational conversation."

"I have heard of fear making a man white," said the soldier, drawing back, and staring as if his eyes would start from their sockets, "but it has changed the royal captain to a black!"

The truth was, that Cæsar, unable to hear what Mason uttered in a low voice, and having every fear aroused in him by what had already passed, incautiously removed the wig a little from one of his ears, in order to hear the better, without in the least remembering that its color might prove fatal to his disguise. The sentinel had kept his eyes fastened on his prisoner, and noticed the action. The attention of Mason was instantly drawn to the same object; and, forgetting all delicacy for a brother officer in distress, or, in short, forgetting everything but the censure that might alight on his corps, the lieutenant sprang forward and seized the terrified African by the throat; for no sooner had Cæsar heard his color named, than he knew his discovery was certain; and at the first sound of Mason's heavy boot on the floor, he arose from his seat, and retreated precipitately to a corner of the room.

"Who are you?" cried Mason, dashing the head of the old man against the angle of the wall at each interrogatory, "who the devil are you, and where is the Englishman? Speak, thou thundercloud! Answer me, you jackdaw, or I'll hang you on the gallows of the spy!"

Cæsar continued firm. Neither the threats nor the blows could extract any reply, until the lieutenant, by a very natural transition in the attack, sent his heavy boot forward in a direction that brought it in direct contact with the most sensitive part of the negro — his shin. The most obdurate heart could not have exacted further patience, and Cæsar instantly gave in. The first words he spoke were —

"Golly! massa, you t'ink I got no feelin'?"

"By heavens!" shouted the lieutenant, "it is the negro himself! Scoundrel! where is your master, and who was

the priest?" While speaking, he made a movement, as if about to renew the attack; but Cæsar cried aloud for mercy, promising to tell all that he knew.

"Who was the priest?" repeated the dragoon, drawing back his formidable leg, and holding it in threatening suspense.

"Harvey, Harvey!" cried Cæsar, dancing from one leg to the other, as he thought each member in turn might be assailed.

"Harvey, who, you black villain?" cried the impatient lieutenant, as he executed a full measure of vengeance by letting his leg fly.

"Birch!" shrieked Cæsar, falling on his knees, the tears rolling in large drops over his shining face.

"Harvey Birch!" echoed the trooper, hurling the black from him, and rushing from the room. "To arms! to arms! Fifty guineas for the life of the pedler spy — give no quarter to either. Mount, mount! to arms! to horse!"

During the uproar occasioned by the assembling of the dragoons, who all rushed tumultuously to their horses, Cæsar rose from the floor, where he had been thrown by Mason, and began to examine into his injuries. Happily for himself, he had alighted on his head, and consequently sustained no material damage.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

COWPER.

THE road which it was necessary for the pedler and the English captain to travel, in order to reach the shelter of the hills, lay, for a half-mile, in full view from the door of the building that had so recently been the prison of the latter; running for the whole distance over the rich plain, that spreads to the very foot of the mountains, which here rise in a nearly perpendicular ascent from their bases; it then turned short to the right, and was obliged to follow the windings of nature, as it won its way into the bosom of the Highlands.

To preserve the supposed difference in their stations, Harvey rode a short distance ahead of his companion, and maintained the sober, dignified pace, that was suited to his assumed character. On their right, the regiment of foot, that we have already mentioned, lay in tents; and the sentinels who guarded their encampment were to be seen moving with measured tread under the hills themselves.

The first impulse of Henry was, certainly, to urge the beast he rode to his greatest speed at once, and by a coup-de-main not only accomplish his escape, but relieve himself from the torturing suspense of his situation. But the forward movement that the youth made for this purpose was instantly checked by the pedler.

"Hold up!" he cried, dexterously reining his own horse across the path of the other; "would you ruin us both? Fall into the place of a black, following his master. Did

you not see their blooded chargers, all saddled and bridled standing in the sun before the house? How long do you think that miserable Dutch horse you are on would hold his speed, if pursued by the Virginians? Every foot that we can gain, without giving the alarm, counts a day in our lives. Ride steadily after me, and on no account look back. They are as subtle as foxes, aye, and as ravenous for blood as wolves!"

Henry reluctantly restrained his impatience, and followed the direction of the pedler. His imagination, however, continually alarmed him with the fancied sounds of pursuit though Birch, who occasionally looked back under the pretense of addressing his companion, assured him that all continued quiet and peaceful.

"But," said Henry, "it will not be possible for Cæsar to remain long undiscovered. Had we not better put our horses to the gallop, and by the time they can reflect on the cause of our flight, we can reach the corner of the woods?"

"Ah! you little know them, Captain Wharton," returned the pedler; "there is a sergeant at this moment looking after us, as if he thought all was not right; the keen-eyed fellow watches me like a tiger lying in wait for his leap. When I stood on the horseblock, he half suspected that something was wrong. Nay, check your beast — we must let the animals walk a little, for he is laying his hand on the pommel of his saddle. If he mounts, we are gone. The foot-soldiers could reach us with their muskets."

"What does he now?" asked Henry, reining his horse to a walk, but at the same time pressing his heels into the animal's sides, to be in readiness for a spring.

"He turns from his charger, and looks the other way; now trot on gently — not so fast — not so fast. Observe the sentinel in the field, a little ahead of us — he eyes us keenly."

"Never mind the footman," said Henry, impatiently; "he can do nothing but shoot us — whereas these dragoons may make me a captive again. Surely, Harvey, there are horse moving down the road behind us. Do you see nothing particular?"

"Humph!" ejaculated the pedler; "there is something particular, indeed, to be seen behind the thicket on our left. Turn your head a little, and you may see and profit by it too."

Henry eagerly seized this permission to look aside, and the blood curdled to his heart as he observed that they were passing a gallows, which unquestionably had been erected for his own execution. He turned his face from the sight, in undisguised horror.

"There is a warning to be prudent," said the pedler, in the sententious manner that he often adopted.

"It is a terrific sight, indeed!" cried Henry, for a moment veiling his eyes with his hand, as if to drive a vision from before him.

The pedler moved his body partly around, and spoke with energetic but gloomy bitterness: "And yet, Captain Wharton, you see it where the setting sun shines full upon you; the air you breathe is clear, and fresh from the hills before you. Every step that you take leaves that hated gallows behind; and every dark hollow, and every shapeless rock in the mountains, offers you a hiding-place from the vengeance of your enemies. But I have seen the gibbet raised, when no place of refuge offered. Twice have I been buried in dungeons, where, fettered and in chains, I have passed nights in torture, looking forward to the morning's dawn that was to light me to a death of infamy. The sweat has started from limbs that seemed already drained of their moisture; and if I ventured to the hole that admitted air through grates of iron to look out upon the smiles of nature, which God has bestowed for the meanest of his creatures, the gibbet has glared before my eyes, like an evil conscience harrowing the soul of a dying man. Four times have I been in their power, besides this last; but — twice — did I think my hour had come. It is hard to die at the best, Captain Wharton; but to spend your last moments alone and unpitied, to know that none near you so much as think of the fate that is to you the closing of all that is earthly; to think that, in a few hours, you are to be led from the gloom, which, as you dwell on what fol

lows, becomes dear to you, to the face of day, and there to meet all eyes fixed upon you, as if you were a wild beast; and to lose sight of everything amidst the jeers and scoffs of your fellow-creatures — that, Captain Wharton, that indeed is to die!"

Henry listened in amazement, as his companion uttered this speech with a vehemence altogether new to him; both seemed to have forgotten their danger and their disguises.

"What! were you ever so near death as that?"

"Have I not been the hunted beast of these hills for three years past?" resumed Harvey; "and once they even led me to the foot of the gallows itself, and I escaped only by an alarm from the royal troops. Had they been a quarter of an hour later, I must have died. There was I placed in the midst of unfeeling men, and gaping women and children, as a monster to be cursed. When I would pray to God, my ears were insulted with the history of my crimes; and when, in all that multitude, I looked around for a single face that showed me any pity, I could find none — no, not even one; all cursed me as a wretch who would sell his country for gold. The sun was brighter to my eyes than common — but it was the last time I should see it. The fields were gay and pleasant, and everything seemed as if this world was a kind of heaven. Oh! how sweet life was to me at that moment! 'Twas a dreadful hour, Captain Wharton, and such as you have never known. You have friends to feel for you, but I had none but a father to mourn my loss, when he might hear of it; but there was no pity, no consolation near, to soothe my anguish. Everything seemed to have deserted me. I even thought that HE had forgotten that I lived."

"What! did you feel that God himself had forgotten you, Harvey?"

"God never forsakes his servants," returned Birch, with reverence, and exhibiting naturally a devotion that hitherto he had only assumed.

"And whom did you mean by HE?"

The pedler raised himself in his saddle to the stiff and upright posture that was suited to his outward appearance.

The look of fire, that for a short time glowed on his countenance, disappeared in the solemn lines of unbending self-abasement, and, speaking as if addressing a negro, he replied, —

"In heaven there is no distinction of color, my brother; therefore you have a precious charge within you, that you must hereafter render an account of;" dropping his voice — "this is the last sentinel near the road; look not back, as you value your life."

Henry remembered his situation, and instantly assumed the humble demeanor of his adopted character. The unaccountable energy of the pedler's manner was soon forgotten in the sense of his own immediate danger; and with the recollection of his critical situation, returned all the uneasiness that he had momentarily forgotten.

"What see you, Harvey?" he cried, observing the pedler to gaze towards the building they had left, with ominous interest; "what see you at the house?"

"That which bodes no good to us," returned the pretended priest. "Throw aside the mask and wig; you will need all your senses without much delay; throw them in the road: there are none before us that I dread, but there are those behind who will give us a fearful race!"

"Nay, then," cried the captain, casting the implements of his disguise into the highway, "let us improve our time to the utmost. We want a full quarter to the turn; why not push for it, at once?"

"Be cool; they are in alarm, but they will not mount without an officer, unless they see us fly — now he comes, he moves to the stables; trot briskly; a dozen are in their saddles, but the officer stops to tighten his girths; they hope to steal a march upon us; he is mounted; now ride, Captain Wharton, for your life, and keep at my heels. If you quit me, you will be lost!"

A second request was unnecessary. The instant that Harvey put his horse to his speed, Captain Wharton was at his heels, urging the miserable animal he rode to the utmost. Birch had selected his own beast; and although vastly inferior to the high-fed and blooded chargers of the

dragoons, still it was much superior to the little pony that had been thought good enough to carry Cæsar Thompson on an errand. A very few jumps convinced the captain that his companion was fast leaving him, and a fearful glance thrown behind informed the fugitive that his enemies were as speedily approaching. With that abandonment that makes misery doubly grievous, when it is to be supported alone, Henry cried aloud to the pedler not to desert him. Harvey instantly drew up, and suffered his companion to run alongside of his own horse. The cocked hat and wig of the pedler fell from his head the moment that his steed began to move briskly, and this development of their disguise, as it might be termed, was witnessed by the dragoons, who announced their observation by a boisterous shout, that seemed to be uttered in the very ears of the fugitives; so loud was the cry, and so short the distance between them.

"Had we not better leave our horses?" said Henry, "and make for the hills across the fields, on our left?—the fence will stop our pursuers."

"That way lies the gallows," returned the pedler; "these fellows go three feet to our two, and would mind the fences no more than we do these ruts; but it is a short quarter to the turn, and there are two roads behind the wood. They may stand to choose until they can take the track, and we shall gain a little upon them there."

"But this miserable horse is blown already," cried Henry, urging his beast with the end of his bridle, at the same time that Harvey aided his efforts by applying the lash of a heavy riding-whip he carried; "he will never stand it for half a mile farther."

"A quarter will do; a quarter will do," said the pedler; a single quarter will save us, if you follow my directions."

Somewhat cheered by the cool and confident manner of his companion, Henry continued silently urging his horse forward. A few moments brought them to the desired turn, and as they doubled round a point of low underbrush, the fugitives caught a glimpse of their pursuers

scattered along the highway. Mason and the sergeant, being better mounted than the rest of the party, were much nearer to their heels than even the pedler thought could be possible.

At the foot of the hills, and for some distance up the dark valley that wound among the mountains, a thick underwood of saplings had been suffered to shoot up, where the heavier growth was felled for the sake of the fuel. At the sight of this cover, Henry again urged the pedler to dismount, and to plunge into the woods; but his request was promptly refused. The two roads, before mentioned, met at a very sharp angle, at a short distance from the turn, and both were circuitous, so that but little of either could be seen at a time. The pedler took the one which led to the left, but held it only a moment; for, on reaching a partial opening in the thicket, he darted across into the right-hand path, and led the way up a steep ascent, which lay directly before them. This manœuvre saved them. On reaching the fork, the dragoons followed the track, and passed the spot where the fugitives had crossed to the other road, before they missed the marks of the footsteps. Their loud cries were heard by Henry and the pedler, as their wearied and breathless animals toiled up the hill, ordering their comrades in the rear to ride in the right direction. The captain again proposed to leave their horses and dash into the thicket.

"Not yet, not yet," said Birch, in a low voice; "the road falls from the top of this hill as steep as it rises; first let us gain the top." While speaking, they reached the desired summit, and both threw themselves from their horses, Henry plunging into the thick underwood, which covered the side of the mountain for some distance above them. Harvey stopped to give each of their beasts a few severe blows of his whip, that drove them headlong down the path on the other side of the eminence, and then followed his example.

The pedler entered the thicket with a little caution, and avoided, as much as possible, rustling or breaking the branches in his way. There was but time only to shelter

his person from view, when a dragoon led up the ascent; and on reaching the height, he cried aloud, —

"I saw one of their horses turning the hill this minute."

"Drive on; spur forward, my lads," shouted Mason; "give the Englishman quarter, but cut down the pedler, and make an end of him."

Henry felt his companion gripe his arm hard, as he listened in a great tremor to this cry, which was followed by the passage of a dozen horsemen, with a vigor and speed that showed too plainly how little security their overtired steeds could have afforded them.

"Now," said the pedler, rising from the cover to reconnoitre, and standing for a moment in suspense, "all that we gain is clear gain; for, as we go up, they go down. Let us be stirring."

"But will they not follow us, and surround this mountain?" said Henry, rising, and imitating the labored but rapid progress of his companion; "remember, they have foot as well as horse, and, at any rate, we shall starve in the hills."

"Fear nothing, Captain Wharton," returned the pedler, with confidence; "this is not the mountain that I would be on, but necessity has made me a dexterous pilot among these hills. I will lead you where no man will dare to follow. See, the sun is already setting behind the tops of the western mountains, and it will be two hours to the rising of the moon. Who, think you, will follow us far, on a November night, among these rocks and precipices?"

"Listen!" exclaimed Henry; "the dragoons are shouting to each other; they miss us already."

"Come to the point of this rock, and you may see them," said Harvey, composedly setting himself down to rest. "Nay, they can see us — observe, they are pointing up with their fingers. There! one has fired his pistol, but the distance is too great even for a musket."

"They will pursue us," cried the impatient Henry; "let us be moving."

"They will not think of such a thing," returned the pedler, picking the checkerberries that grew on the thin

soil where he sat, and very deliberately chewing them, leaves and all, to refresh his mouth. "What progress could they make here, in their heavy boots and spurs, and long swords? No, no — they may go back and turn out the foot, but the horse pass through these defiles, when they can keep the saddle, with fear and trembling. Come, follow me, Captain Wharton; we have a troublesome march before us, but I will bring you where none will think of venturing this night."

So saying, they both arose, and were soon hid from view amongst the rocks and caverns of the mountain.

The conjecture of the pedler was true. Mason and his men dashed down the hill, in pursuit, as they supposed, of their victims, but on reaching the bottom lands, they found only the deserted horses of the fugitives. Some little time was spent in examining the woods near them, and in endeavoring to take the trail on such ground as might enable the horse to pursue, when one of the party descried the pedler and Henry seated on the rock already mentioned.

"He's off," muttered Mason, eying Harvey, with fury; "he's off, and we are disgraced. By heavens, Washington will not trust us with the keeping of a suspected tory, if we let the rascal trifle in this manner with the corps; and there sits the Englishman, too, looking down upon us with a smile of benevolence! I fancy that I can see it. Well, well, my lad, you are comfortably seated, I will confess, and that is something better than dancing upon nothing; but you are not to the west of the Harlaem River yet, and I'll try your wind before you tell Sir Henry what you have seen, or I'm no soldier."

"Shall I fire, and frighten the pedler?" asked one of the men, drawing his pistol from the holster.

"Aye, startle the birds from their perch — let us see how they can use the wing." The man fired the pistol, and Mason continued — "Fore George, I believe the scoundrels laugh at us. But homeward, or we shall have them rolling stones upon our heads, and the royal gazettes teeming with an account of a rebel regiment routed by two

loyalists. They have told bigger lies than that, before now."

The dragoons moved sullenly after their officer, who rode towards their quarters, musing on the course it behooved him to pursue in the present dilemma. It was twilight when Mason's party reached the dwelling, before the door of which were collected a great number of the officers and men, busily employed in giving and listening to the most exaggerated accounts of the escape of the spy. The mortified dragoons gave their ungrateful tidings with the sullen air of disappointed men; and most of the officers gathered round Mason, to consult of the steps that ought to be taken. Miss Peyton and Frances were breathless and unobserved listeners to all that passed between them, from the window of the chamber immediately above their heads.

"Something must be done, and that speedily," observed the commanding officer of the regiment, which lay encamped before the house: "this English officer is doubtless an instrument in the great blow aimed at us by the enemy lately; besides, our honor is involved in his escape."

"Let us beat the woods!" cried several at once; "by morning we shall have them both again."

"Softly, softly, gentlemen," returned the colonel; "no man can travel these hills after dark, unless used to the passes. Nothing but horse can do service in this business, and I presume Lieutenant Mason hesitates to move without the orders of his major."

"I certainly dare not," replied the subaltern, gravely shaking his head, "unless you will take the responsibility of an order; but Major Dunwoodie will be back again in two hours, and we can carry the tidings through the hills before daylight; so that by spreading patrols across, from one river to the other, and offering a reward to the country people, their escape will yet be impossible, unless they can join the party that is said to be out on the Hudson."

"A very plausible plan," cried the colonel, "and one that must succeed; but let a messenger be dispatched to

Dunwoodie, or he may continue at the ferry until it proves too late; though doubtless the runaways will lie in the mountains to-night."

To this suggestion Mason acquiesced, and a courier was sent to the major with the important intelligence of the escape of Henry, and an intimation of the necessity of his presence to conduct the pursuit. After this arrangement, the officers separated.

When Miss Peyton and her niece first learnt the escape of Captain Wharton, it was with difficulty they could credit their senses. They both relied so implicitly on the success of Dunwoodie's exertions, that they thought the act, on the part of their relative, extremely imprudent; but it was now too late to mend it. While listening to the conversation of the officers, both were struck with the increased danger of Henry's situation, if recaptured, and they trembled to think of the great exertions that would be made to accomplish this object. Miss Peyton consoled herself, and endeavored to cheer her niece, with the probability that the fugitives would pursue their course with unremitting diligence, so that they might reach the neutral ground before the horse would carry down the tidings of their flight. The absence of Dunwoodie seemed to her all-important, and the artless lady was anxiously devising some project that might detain her kinsman, and thus give her nephew the longest possible time. But very different were the reflections of Frances. She could no longer doubt that the figure she had seen on the hill was Birch, and she felt certain that, instead of flying to the friendly forces below, her brother would be taken to the mysterious hut to pass the night.

Frances and her aunt held a long and animated discussion by themselves, when the good spinster reluctantly yielded to the representation of her niece, and, folding her in her arms, she kissed her cold cheek, and, fervently blessing her allowed her to depart on an errand of fraternal love.

CHAPTER XXX.

And here, forlorn and lost, I tread,
With fainting steps, and slow;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length'ning as I go.

GOLDSMITH.

THE night had set in dark and chilling, as Frances Wharton, with a beating heart but light step, moved through the little garden that lay behind the farm-house which had been her brother's prison, and took her way to the foot of the mountain, where she had seen the figure of him she supposed to be the pedler. It was still early, but the darkness and the dreary nature of a November evening would, at any other moment, or with less inducement to exertion, have driven her back in terror to the circle she had left. Without pausing to reflect, however, she flew over the ground with a rapidity that seemed to bid defiance to all impediments, nor stopped even to breathe, until she had gone half the distance to the rock that she had marked as the spot where Birch made his appearance on that very morning.

The good treatment of their women is the surest evidence that a people can give of their civilization; and there is no nation which has more to boast of, in this respect, than the Americans. Frances felt but little apprehension from the orderly and quiet troops who were taking their evening's repast on the side of the highway, opposite to the field through which she was flying. They were her countrymen, and she knew that her sex would be respected by the Eastern militia, who composed this body; but in the volatile and reckless character of the Southern horse she had less confidence. Outrages of any description were seldom committed

by the really American soldiery; but she recoiled, with exquisite delicacy, from even the appearance of humiliation. When, therefore, she heard the footsteps of a horse moving slowly up the road, she shrank, timidly, into a little thicket of wood which grew around the spring that bubbled from the side of a hillock near her. The vidette, for such it proved to be, passed her without noticing her form, which was so enveloped as to be as little conspicuous as possible, humming a low air to himself, and probably thinking of some other fair that he had left on the banks of the Potomac.

Frances listened anxiously to the retreating footsteps of his horse, and, as they died upon her ear, she ventured from her place of secrecy, and advanced a short distance into the field, where, startled at the gloom, and appalled with the dreariness of the prospect, she paused to reflect on what she had undertaken. Throwing back the hood of her cardinal, she sought the support of a tree, and gazed towards the summit of the mountain that was to be the goal of her enterprise. It rose from the plain like a huge pyramid, giving nothing to the eye but its outlines. The pinnacle could be faintly discerned in front of a lighter background of clouds, between which a few glimmering stars occasionally twinkled in momentary brightness, and then gradually became obscured by the passing vapor that was moving before the wind, at a vast distance below the clouds themselves. Should she return, Henry and the pedler would most probably pass the night in fancied security upon that very hill towards which she was straining her eyes, in the vain hope of observing some light that might encourage her to proceed. The deliberate, and what to her seemed cold-blooded, project of the officer for the recapture of the fugitives, still rang in her ears, and stimulated her to go on; but the solitude into which she must venture, the time, the actual danger of the ascent, and the uncertainty of her finding the hut, or what was still more disheartening, the chance that it might be occupied by unknown tenants, and those of the worst description — urged her to retreat.

The increasing darkness was each moment renderin

objects less and less distinct, and the clouds were gathering more gloomily in the rear of the hill, until its form could no longer be discerned. Frances threw back her rich curls with both hands on her temples, in order to possess her senses in their utmost keenness; but the towering hill was entirely lost to the eye. At length she discovered a faint and twinkling blaze in the direction in which she thought the building stood, that, by its reviving and receding lustre, might be taken for the glimmering of a fire. But the delusion vanished, as the horizon again cleared, and the star of evening shone forth from a cloud, after struggling hard, as if for existence. She now saw the mountain to the left of the place where the planet was shining, and suddenly a streak of mellow light burst upon the fantastic oaks that were thinly scattered over its summit, and gradually moved down its side, until the whole pile became distinct under the rays of the rising moon. Although it would have been physically impossible for our heroine to advance without the aid of the friendly light, which now gleamed on the long line of level land before her, yet she was not encouraged to proceed. If she could see the goal of her wishes, she could also perceive the difficulties that must attend her reaching it.

While deliberating in distressing incertitude, now shrinking with the timidity of her sex and years from the enterprise, and now resolving to rescue her brother at every hazard, Frances turned her looks towards the east, in earnest gaze at the clouds which constantly threatened to involve her again in comparative darkness. Had an adder stung her, she could not have sprung with greater celerity than she recoiled from the object against which she was leaning, and which she for the first time noticed. The two upright posts, with a cross-beam on their tops, and a rude platform beneath, told but too plainly the nature of the structure; even the cord was suspended from an iron staple, and was swinging to and fro, in the night air. Frances hesitated no longer, but rather flew than ran across the meadow, and was soon at the base of the rock, where she hoped to find something like a path to the summit of the mountain. Here she was compelled to pause for breath, and she improved

the leisure by surveying the ground about her. The ascent was quite abrupt, but she soon found a sheep-path that wound among the shelving rocks and through the trees, so as to render her labor much less tiresome than it otherwise would have been. Throwing a fearful glance behind, the determined girl commenced her journey upwards. Young, active, and impelled by her generous motive, she moved up the hill with elastic steps, and very soon emerged from the cover of the woods, into an open space of more level ground, that had evidently been cleared of its timber, for the purpose of cultivation. But either the war or the sterility of the soil had compelled the adventurer to abandon the advantages that he had obtained over the wilderness, and already the bushes and briers were springing up afresh, as if the plough had never traced its furrows through the mould which nourished them.

Frances felt her spirits invigorated by these faint vestiges of the labor of man, and she walked up the gentle acclivity with renewed hopes of success. The path now diverged in so many different directions, that she soon saw it would be useless to follow their windings, and abandoning it, at the first turn, she labored forward towards what she thought was the nearest point of the summit. The cleared ground was soon past, and woods and rocks, clinging to the precipitous sides of the mountain, again opposed themselves to her progress. Occasionally, the path was to be seen running along the verge of the clearing, and then striking off into the scattering patches of grass and herbage, but in no instance could she trace it upward. Tufts of wool, hanging to the briers, sufficiently denoted the origin of these tracks, and Frances rightly conjectured that whoever descended the mountain, would avail himself of their existence, to lighten the labor. Seating herself on a stone, the wearied girl again paused to rest and to reflect: the clouds were rising before the moon, and the whole scene at her feet lay pictured in the softest colors.

The white tents of the militia were stretched in regular lines, immediately beneath her. The light was shining in the window of her aunt, who, Frances easily fancied, was

watching the mountain, racked with all the anxiety she might be supposed to feel for her niece. Lanterns were playing about in the stable-yard, where she knew the horses of the dragoons were kept, and believing them to be preparing for their night march, she again sprang upon her feet, and renewed her toil.

Our heroine had to ascend more than a quarter of a mile farther, although she had already conquered two thirds of the height of the mountain. But she was now without a path, or any guide to direct her in her course. Fortunately, the hill was conical, like most of the mountains in that range, and, by advancing upwards, she was certain of at length reaching the desired hut, which hung, as it were, on the very pinnacle. Nearly an hour did she struggle with the numerous difficulties that she was obliged to overcome, when, having been repeatedly exhausted with her efforts, and, in several instances, in great danger from falls, she succeeded in gaining the small piece of table-land on the summit.

Faint with her exertions, which had been unusually severe for so slight a frame, she sank on a rock, to recover her strength and fortitude for the approaching interview. A few moments sufficed for this purpose, when she proceeded in quest of the hut. All of the neighboring hills were distinctly visible by the aid of the moon, and Frances was able, where she stood, to trace the route of the highway, from the plains into the mountains. By following this line with her eyes, she soon discovered the point whence she had seen the mysterious dwelling, and directly opposite to that point she well knew the hut must stand.

The chilling air sighed through the leafless branches of the gnarled and crooked oaks, as with a step so light as hardly to rustle the dry leaves on which she trod, Frances moved forward to that part of the hill where she expected to find this secluded habitation; but nothing could she discern that in the least resembled a dwelling of any sort. In vain she examined every recess of the rocks, or inquisitively explored every part of the summit that she thought could hold the tenement of the pedler. No hut, nor any vestige

of a human being could she trace. The idea of her solitude struck on the terrified mind of the affrighted girl, and approaching to the edge of a shelving rock, she bent forward to gaze on the signs of life in the vale, when a ray of keen light dazzled her eyes, and a warm air diffused itself over her whole frame. Recovering from her surprise, Frances looked on the ledge beneath her, and at once perceived that she stood directly over the object of her search. A hole through its roof afforded a passage to the smoke, which, as it blew aside, showed her a clear and cheerful fire crackling and snapping on a rude hearth of stone. The approach to the front of the hut was by a winding path around the point of the rock on which she stood, and by this she advanced to its door.

Three sides of this singular edifice, if such it could be called, were composed of logs laid alternately on each other, to a little more than the height of a man; and the fourth was formed by the rock against which it leaned. The roof was made of the bark of trees, laid in long strips from the rock to its eaves; the fissures between the logs had been stuffed with clay, which in many places had fallen out, and dried leaves were made use of as a substitute, to keep out the wind. A single window of four panes of glass was in front, but a board carefully closed it, in such a manner as to emit no light from the fire within. After pausing some time to view this singularly constructed hiding-place, for such Frances well knew it to be, she applied her eye to a crevice to examine the inside. There was no lamp or candle, but the blazing fire of dry wood made the interior of the hut light enough to read by. In one corner lay a bed of straw, with a pair of blankets thrown carelessly over it, as if left where they had last been used. Against the walls and rock were suspended, from pegs forced into the crevices, various garments, and such as were apparently fitted for all ages and conditions, and for either sex. British and American uniforms hung peaceably by the side of each other; and on the peg that supported a gown of striped calico, such as was the usual country wear, was also depending a well-powdered wig: in short, the attire was numerous,

and as various as if a whole parish were to be equipped from this one wardrobe.

In the angle against the rock, and opposite to the fire which was burning in the other corner, was an open cupboard, that held a plate or two, a mug, and the remains of some broken meat. Before the fire was a table, with one of its legs fractured, and made of rough boards; these, with a single stool, composed the furniture, if we except a few articles of cooking. A book that, by its size and shape, appeared to be a Bible, was lying on the table, unopened. But it was the occupant of the hut in whom Frances was chiefly interested. This was a man, sitting on the stool, with his head leaning on his hand, in such a manner as to conceal his features, and deeply occupied in examining some open papers. On the table lay a pair of curiously and richly mounted horseman's pistols, and the handle of a sheathed rapier, of exquisite workmanship, protruded from between the legs of the gentleman, one of whose hands carelessly rested on its guard. The tall stature of this unexpected tenant of the hut, and his form, much more athletic than that of either Harvey or her brother, told Frances, without the aid of his dress, that it was neither of those she sought. A close surtout was buttoned high in the throat of the stranger, and parting at his knees, showed breeches of buff, with military boots and spurs. His hair was dressed so as to expose the whole face; and, after the fashion of that day, it was profusely powdered. A round hat was laid on the stones that formed a paved floor to the hut, as if to make room for a large map, which, among the other papers, occupied the table.

This was an unexpected event to our adventurer. She had been so confident that the figure twice seen was the pedler, that on learning his agency in her brother's escape, she did not in the least doubt of finding them both in the place, which, she now discovered, was occupied by another and a stranger. She stood, earnestly looking through the crevice, hesitating whether to retire, or to wait with the expectation of yet meeting Henry, as the stranger moved his hand from before his eyes, and raised his face, appar-

ently in deep musing, when Frances instantly recognized the benevolent and strongly marked, but composed features of Harper.

All that Dunwoodie had said of his power and disposition, all that he had himself promised her brother, and all the confidence that had been created by his dignified and paternal manner, rushed across the mind of Frances, who threw open the door of the hut, and falling at his feet, clasped his knees with her arms, as she cried, —

"Save him — save him — save my brother; remember your promise, and save him!"

Harper had risen as the door opened, and there was a slight movement of one hand towards his pistols; but it was cool and instantly checked. He raised the hood of the cardinal, which had fallen over her features, and exclaimed, with some uneasiness, —

"Miss Wharton! But you cannot be alone?"

"There is none here but my God and you; and by his sacred name, I conjure you to remember your promise, and save my brother!"

Harper gently raised her from her knees, and placed her on the stool, begging her at the same time to be composed, and to acquaint him with the nature of her errand. This Frances instantly did, ingenuously admitting him to a knowledge of all her views in visiting that lone spot at such an hour, and by herself.

It was at all times difficult to probe the thoughts of one who held his passions in such disciplined subjection as Harper, but still there was a lighting of his thoughtful eye, and a slight unbending of his muscles, as the hurried and anxious girl proceeded in her narrative. His interest, as she dwelt upon the manner of Henry's escape, and the flight to the woods, was deep and manifest, and he listened to the remainder of her tale with a marked expression of benevolent indulgence. Her apprehensions, that her brother might still be too late through the mountains, seemed to have much weight with him, for, as she concluded, he walked a turn or two across the hut, in silent musing.

Frances hesitated, and unconsciously played with the

handle of one of the pistols, and the paleness that her fears had spread over her fine features began to give place to a rich tint, as, after a short pause, she added, —

"We can depend much on the friendship of Major Dunwoodie, but his sense of honor is so pure, that — that — notwithstanding his — his — feelings — his desire to serve us — he will conceive it to be his duty to apprehend my brother again. Besides, he thinks there will be no danger in so doing, as he relies greatly on your interference."

"On mine!" said Harper, raising his eyes in surprise.

"Yes, on yours. When we told him of your kind language, he at once assured us all that you had the power, and, if you had promised, would have the inclination, to procure Henry's pardon."

"Said he more?" asked Harper, who appeared slightly uneasy.

"Nothing but reiterated assurances of Henry's safety; even now he is in quest of you."

"Miss Wharton, that I bear no mean part, in the unhappy struggle between England and America, it might now be useless to deny. You owe your brother's escape, this night, to my knowledge of his innocence, and the remembrance of my word. Major Dunwoodie is mistaken, when he says that I might openly have procured his pardon. I now, indeed, can control his fate, and I pledge to you a word which has some influence with Washington, that means shall be taken to prevent his recapture. But from you, also, I exact a promise, that this interview, and all that has passed between us, remain confined to your own bosom, until you have my permission to speak upon the subject."

Frances gave the desired assurance, and he continued, —

"The pedler and your brother will soon be here, but I must not be seen by the royal officer, or the life of Birch might be the forfeiture."

"Never!" cried Frances, ardently; "Henry could never be so base as to betray the man who saved him."

"It is no childish game that we are now playing, Miss

Wharton. Men's lives and fortunes hang upon slender threads, and nothing must be left to accident that can be guarded against. Did Sir Henry Clinton know that the pedler had communion with me, and under such circumstances, the life of the miserable man would be taken instantly; therefore, as you value human blood, or remember the rescue of your brother, be prudent, and be silent. Communicate what you know to them both, and urge them to instant departure. If they can reach the last pickets of our army before morning, it shall be my care that there are none to intercept them. There is better work for Major Dunwoodie than to be exposing the life of his friend."

While Harper was speaking, he carefully rolled up the map he had been studying, and placed it, together with sundry papers that were also open, into his pocket. He was still occupied in this manner, when the voice of the pedler, talking in unusually loud tones, was heard directly over their heads.

"Stand farther this way, Captain Wharton, and you can see the tents in the moonshine. But let them mount and ride; I have a nest, here, that will hold us both, and we will go in at our leisure."

"And where is this nest? I confess that I have eaten but little the last two days, and I crave some of the cheer you mention."

"Hem!" said the pedler, exerting his voice still more; "hem — this fog has given me a cold; but move slow — and be careful not to slip, or you may land on the bayonet of the sentinel on the flats; 'tis a steep hill to rise, but one can go down it with ease."

Harper pressed his finger on his lip, to remind Frances of her promise, and, taking his pistols and hat, so that no vestige of his visit remained, he retired deliberately to a far corner of the hut, where, lifting several articles of dress, he entered a recess in the rock, and, letting them fall again, was hid from view. Frances noticed, by the strong firelight, as he entered, that it was a natural cavity, and contained nothing but a few more articles of domestic use.

The surprise of Henry and the pedler, on entering and finding Frances in possession of the hut, may be easily imagined. Without waiting for explanations or questions, the warm-hearted girl flew into the arms of her brother, and gave a vent to her emotions in tears. But the pedler seemed struck with very different feelings. His first look was at the fire, which had been recently supplied with fuel; he then drew open a small drawer of the table, and looked a little alarmed at finding it empty.

"Are you alone, Miss Fanny?" he asked, in a quick voice; "you did not come here alone?"

"As you see me, Mr. Birch," said Frances, raising herself from her brother's arms, and turning an expressive glance towards the secret cavern, that the quick eye of the pedler instantly understood.

"But why and wherefore are you here?" exclaimed her astonished brother; "and how knew you of this place at all?"

Frances entered at once into a brief detail of what had occurred at the house since their departure, and the motives which induced her to seek them.

"But," said Birch, "why follow us here, when we were left on the opposite hill?"

Frances related the glimpse that she had caught of the hut and pedler, in her passage through the Highlands, as well as her view of him on that day, and her immediate conjecture that the fugitives would seek the shelter of this habitation for the night. Birch examined her features as, with open ingenuousness, she related the simple incidents that had made her mistress of his secret; and, as she ended, he sprang upon his feet, and, striking the window with the stick in his hand, demolished it at a blow.

"'Tis but little luxury or comfort that I know," he said, "but even that little cannot be enjoyed in safety! Miss Wharton," he added, advancing before Fanny, and speaking with the bitter melancholy that was common to him, "I am hunted through these hills like a beast of the forest; but whenever, tired with my toils, I can reach this spot, poor and dreary as it is, I can spend my solitary nights in safety

Will you aid to make the life of a wretch still more miserable?"

"Never!" cried Frances, with fervor; "your secret is safe with me."

"Major Dunwoodie" — said the pedler, slowly, turning an eye upon her that read her soul.

Frances lowered her head upon her bosom, for a moment, in shame; then, elevating her fine and glowing face, she added, with enthusiasm, —

"Never, never, Harvey, as God may hear my prayers!"

The pedler seemed satisfied; for he drew back, and, watching his opportunity, unseen by Henry, slipped behind the screen, and entered the cavern.

Frances and her brother, who thought his companion had passed through the door, continued conversing on the latter's situation for several minutes, when the former urged the necessity of expedition on his part, in order to precede Dunwoodie, from whose sense of duty they knew they had no escape. The captain took out his pocket-book, and wrote a few lines with his pencil; then folding the paper, he handed it to his sister.

"Frances," he said, "you have this night proved yourself to be an incomparable woman. As you love me, give that unopened to Dunwoodie, and remember that two hours may save my life."

"I will — I will; but why delay? Why not fly, and improve these precious moments?"

"Your sister says well, Captain Wharton," exclaimed Harvey, who had reëntered unseen; "we must go at once. Here is food to eat, as we travel."

"But who is to see this fair creature in safety?" cried the captain. "I can never desert my sister in such a place as this."

"Leave me! leave me!" said Frances; "I can descend as I came up. Do not doubt me; you know not my courage nor my strength."

"I have not known you, dear girl, it is true; but now, as I learn your value, can I quit you here? Never, never!"

"Captain Wharton," said Birch, throwing open the door

"you can trifle with your own lives, if you have many to spare; I have but one, and must nurse it. Do I go alone, or not?"

"Go, go, dear Henry," said Frances, embracing him; "go; remember our father; remember Sarah." She waited not for his answer, but gently forced him through the door, and closed it with her own hands.

For a short time there was a warm debate between Henry and the pedler; but the latter finally prevailed, and the breathless girl heard the successive plunges, as they went down the sides of the mountain at a rapid rate.

Immediately after the noise of their departure had ceased, Harper reappeared. He took the arm of Frances in silence, and led her from the hut. The way seemed familiar to him; for, ascending to the ledge above them, he led his companion across the table-land tenderly, pointing out the little difficulties in their route, and cautioning her against injury.

Frances felt, as she walked by the side of this extraordinary man, that she was supported by one of no common stamp. The firmness of his step, and the composure of his manner, seemed to indicate a mind settled and resolved. By taking a route over the back of the hill, they descended with great expedition, and but little danger. The distance it had taken Frances an hour to conquer, was passed by Harper and his companion in ten minutes, and they entered the open space already mentioned. He struck into one of the sheep-paths, and, crossing the clearing with rapid steps, they came suddenly upon a horse, caparisoned for a rider of no mean rank. The noble beast snorted and pawed the earth, as his master approached and replaced the pistols in the holsters.

Harper then turned, and, taking the hand of Frances, spoke as follows: —

"You have this night saved your brother, Miss Wharton. It would not be proper for me to explain why there are limits to my ability to serve him; but if you can detain the horse for two hours, he is assuredly safe. After what you have already done, I can believe you equal to any duty

God has denied to me children, young lady; but if it had been his blessed will that my marriage should not have been childless, such a treasure as yourself would I have asked from his mercy. But you are my child: all who dwell in this broad land are my children, and my care; and take the blessing of one who hopes yet to meet you in happier days."

As he spoke, with a solemnity that touched Frances to the heart, he laid his hand impressively upon her head. The guileless girl turned her face towards him, and the hood again falling back, exposed her lovely features to the moon-beams. A tear was glistening on either cheek, and her mild blue eyes were gazing upon him in reverence. Harper bent and pressed a paternal kiss upon her forehead, and continued, "Any of these sheep-paths will take you to the plain; but here we must part — I have much to do, and far to ride; forget me in all but your prayers."

He then mounted his horse, and lifting his hat, rode towards the back of the mountain, descending at the same time, and was soon hid by the trees. Frances sprang forward with a lightened heart, and taking the first path that led downwards, in a few minutes she reached the plain in safety. While busied in stealing through the meadows towards the house, the noise of horse approaching startled her, and she felt how much more was to be apprehended from man, in some situations, than from solitude. Hiding her form in the angle of a fence near the road, she remained quiet for a moment, and watched their passage. A small party of dragoons, whose dress was different from the Virginians, passed at a brisk trot. They were followed by a gentleman, enveloped in a large cloak, whom she at once knew to be Harper. Behind him rode a black in livery, and two youths in uniform brought up the rear. Instead of taking the road that led by the encampment, they turned short to the left, and entered the hills.

Wondering who this unknown but powerful friend of her brother could be, Frances glided across the fields, and using due precautions in approaching the dwelling, regained her residence undiscovered and in safety.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Hence, bashful cunning!
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence;
I am your wife, if you will marry me.

TEMPEST.

On joining Miss Peyton, Frances learnt that Dunwoodie was not yet returned; although, with a view to relieve Henry from the importunities of the supposed fanatic, he had desired a very respectable divine of their own church to ride up from the river and offer his services. This gentleman was already arrived, and had been passing the half-hour he had been there, in a sensible and well-bred conversation with the spinster, that in no degree touched upon their domestic affairs.

To the eager inquiries of Miss Peyton, relative to her success in her romantic excursion, Frances could say no more than that she was bound to be silent, and to recommend the same precaution to the good maiden also. There was a smile playing around the beautiful mouth of Frances, while she uttered this injunction, which satisfied her aunt that all was as it should be. She was urging her niece to take some refreshment after her fatiguing expedition, when the noise of a horseman riding to the door, announced the return of the major. He had been found by the courier who was dispatched by Mason, impatiently waiting the return of Harper to the ferry, and immediately flew to the place where his friend had been confined, tormented by a thousand conflicting fears. The heart of Frances bounded as she listened to his approaching footsteps. It wanted yet an hour to the termination of the shortest period that the pedler had fixed as the time necessary to effect his escape. Even Harper, powerful and well-disposed as he acknowledged himself to be, had laid great stress upon the importance of detaining

the Virginians during that hour. She, however, had not time to rally her thoughts, before Dunwoodie entered one door, as Miss Peyton, with the readiness of female instinct, retired through another.

The countenance of Peyton was flushed, and an air of vexation and disappointment pervaded his manner.

"'Twas imprudent, Frances; nay, it was unkind," he cried, throwing himself in a chair, "to fly at the very moment that I had assured him of safety! I can almost persuade myself that you delight in creating points of difference in our feelings and duties."

"In our duties there may very possibly be a difference," returned his mistress, approaching, and leaning her slender form against the wall; "but not in our feelings, Peyton. You must certainly rejoice in the escape of Henry!"

"There was no danger impending. He had the promise of Harper; and it is a word never to be doubted. Oh! Frances! Frances! had you known the man, you would never have distrusted his assurance; nor would you have again reduced me to this distressing alternative."

"What alternative?" asked Frances, pitying his emotions deeply, but eagerly seizing upon every circumstance to prolong the interview.

"What alternative! am I not compelled to spend this night in the saddle to recapture your brother, when I had thought to lay my head on its pillow, with the happy consciousness of having contributed to his release? You make me seem your enemy; I, who would cheerfully shed the last drop of blood in your service. I repeat, Frances, it was rash; it was unkind; it was a sad, sad mistake."

She bent towards him and timidly took one of his hands, while with the other she gently removed the curls from his burning brow.

"Why go at all, dear Peyton?" she asked. "You have done much for your country, and she cannot exact such a sacrifice as this at your hand."

"Frances! Miss Wharton!" exclaimed the youth, springing on his feet, and pacing the floor with a cheek that burnt through its brown covering, and an eye that sparkled

with wounded integrity; "it is not my country, but my honor, that requires the sacrifice. Has he not fled from a guard of my own corps? But for this, I might have been spared the blow! But if the eyes of the Virginians are blinded to deception and artifice, their horses are swift of foot, and their sabres keen. We shall see, before to-morrow's sun, who will presume to hint that the beauty of the sister furnished a mask to conceal the brother! Yes, yes; I should like, even now," he continued, laughing bitterly, "to hear the villain who would dare to surmise that such treachery existed!"

"Peyton, dear Peyton," said Frances, recoiling from his angry eye, "you curdle my blood — would you kill my brother?"

"Would I not die for him!" exclaimed Dunwoodie, as he turned to her more mildly; "you know I would; but I am distracted with the cruel surmise to which this step of Henry's subjects me. What will Washington think of me, should he learn that I ever became your husband?"

"If that alone impels you to act so harshly towards my brother," returned Frances, with a slight tremor in her voice, "let it never happen for him to learn."

"And this is consolation, Frances!"

"Nay, dear Dunwoodie, I meant nothing harsh or unkind; but are you not making us both of more consequence with Washington than the truth will justify?"

"I trust that my name is not entirely unknown to the commander-in-chief," said the major, a little proudly; "nor are you as obscure as your modesty would make you. I believe you, Frances, when you say that you pity me, and it must be my task to continue worthy of such feelings. But I waste the precious moments; we must go through the hills to-night, that we may be refreshed in time for the duty of to-morrow. Mason is already waiting my orders to mount. Frances, I leave you with a heavy heart; pity me, but feel no concern for your brother; he must again become a prisoner, but every hair of his head is sacred."

"Stop! Dunwoodie, I conjure you," cried Frances, gasping for breath, as she noticed that the hand of the clock

still wanted many minutes to the desired hour; "before you go on your errand of fastidious duty, read this note that Henry has left for you, and which, doubtless, he thought he was writing to the friend of his youth."

"Frances, I excuse your feelings; but the time will come when you will do me justice."

"That time is now," she answered, extending her hand, unable any longer to feign a displeasure that she did not feel.

"Where got you this note?" exclaimed the youth, glancing his eyes over its contents. "Poor Henry, you are indeed my friend! If any one wishes me happiness, it is you!"

"He does, he does," cried Frances, eagerly; "he wishes you every happiness; believe what he tells you; every word is true."

"I do believe him, lovely girl, and he refers me to you for its confirmation. Would that I could trust equally to your affections!"

"You may, Peyton," said Frances, looking up with innocent confidence towards her lover.

"Then read for yourself, and verify your words," interrupted Dunwoodie, holding the note towards her.

Frances received it in astonishment, and read the following:—

"Life is too precious to be trusted to uncertainties. I leave you, Peyton, unknown to all but Cæsar, and I recommend him to your mercy. But there is a care that weighs me to the earth. Look at my aged and infirm parent. He will be reproached for the supposed crime of his son. Look at those helpless sisters that I leave behind me without a protector. Prove to me that you love us all. Let the clergyman whom you will bring with you, unite you this night to Frances, and become at once, brother, son, and husband."

The paper fell from the hands of Frances, and she endeavored to raise her eyes to the face of Dunwoodie, but they sank abashed to the floor.

"Am I worthy of this confidence? Will you send me out this night, to meet my own brother? or will it be the officer of Congress in quest of the officer of Britain?"

"And would you do less of your duty because I am your wife, Major Dunwoodie? in what degree would it better the condition of Henry?"

"Henry, I repeat, is safe. The word of Harper is his guarantee; but I will show the world a bridegroom," continued the youth, perhaps deceiving himself a little, "who is equal to the duty of arresting the brother of his bride."

"And will the world comprehend this refinement?" said Frances, with a musing air, that lighted a thousand hopes in the bosom of her lover. In fact, the temptation was mighty. Indeed, there seemed no other way to detain Dunwoodie until the fatal hour had elapsed. The words of Harper himself, who had so lately told her that openly he could do but little for Henry, and that everything depended upon gaining time, were deeply engraved upon her memory. Perhaps there was also a fleeting thought of the possibility of an eternal separation from her lover, should he proceed and bring back her brother to punishment. It is difficult at all times to analyze human emotions, and they pass through the sensitive heart of a woman with the rapidity and nearly with the vividness of lightning.

"Why do you hesitate, dear Frances?" cried Dunwoodie, who was studying her varying countenance; "a few minutes might give me a husband's claim to protect you."

Frances grew giddy. She turned an anxious eye to the clock, and the hand seemed to linger over its face, as if with intent to torture her.

"Speak, Frances," murmured Dunwoodie; "may I summon my good kinswoman? determine, for time presses."

She endeavored to reply, but could only whisper something that was inaudible, but which her lover, with the privilege of immemorial custom, construed into assent. He turned and flew to the door, when his mistress recovered her voice: —

"Stop, Peyton! I cannot enter into such a solemn ev-

gagement with a fraud upon my conscience. I have seen Henry since his escape, and time is all-important to him. Here is my hand; if, with this knowledge of the consequences of delay, you will not reject it, it is freely yours."

"Reject it!" cried the delighted youth; "I take it as the richest gift of Heaven. There is time enough for us all. Two hours will take me through the hills; and by noon, to-morrow, I will return with Washington's pardon for your brother, and Henry will help to enliven our nuptials."

"Then meet me here, in ten minutes," said Frances, greatly relieved by unburthening her mind, and filled with the hope of securing Henry's safety, "and I will return and take those vows which will bind me to you forever."

Dunwoodie paused only to press her once to his bosom, and flew to communicate his wishes to the priest.

Miss Peyton received the avowal of her niece with infinite astonishment, and a little displeasure. It was violating all the order and decorum of a wedding to get it up so hastily, and with so little ceremony. But Frances, with modest firmness, declared that her resolution was taken; she had long possessed the consent of her friends, and their nuptials, for months, had only waited her pleasure. She had now promised Dunwoodie, and it was her wish to comply; more she dare not say without committing herself, by entering into explanations that might endanger Birch, or Harper, or both. Unused to contention, and really much attached to her kinsman, the feeble objections of Miss Peyton gave way to the firmness of her niece. Mr. Wharton was too completely a convert to the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, to withstand any solicitation from an officer of Dunwoodie's influence in the rebel armies; and the maid returned to the apartment, accompanied by her father and aunt, at the expiration of the time that she had fixed. Dunwoodie and the clergyman were already there. Frances, silently, and without the affectation of reserve, placed in his hand the wedding-ring of her own mother, and after some little time spent in arranging Mr. Wharton and herself, Miss Peyton suffered the ceremony to proceed.

The clock stood directly before the eyes of Frances, and she turned many an anxious glance at the dial; but the solemn language of the priest soon caught her attention, and her mind became intent upon the vows she was uttering. The ceremony was quickly over, and as the clergyman closed the words of benediction, the clock told the hour of nine. This was the time that Harper had deemed so important, and Frances felt as if a mighty load was at once removed from her heart.

Dunwoodie folded her in his arms, saluted the mild aunt again and again, and shook Mr. Wharton and the divine repeatedly by the hands. In the midst of the felicitation, a tap was heard at the door. It was opened, and Mason appeared.

"We are in the saddle," said the lieutenant, "and, with your permission, I will lead on; as you are so well mounted, you can overtake us at your leisure."

"Yes, yes, my good fellow; march," cried Dunwoodie, gladly seizing an excuse to linger; "I will reach you at the first halt."

The subaltern retired to execute these orders; he was followed by Mr. Wharton and the divine.

"Now, Peyton," said Frances, "it is indeed a brother that you seek; I am sure I need not caution you in his behalf, should you unfortunately find him."

"Say fortunately," cried the youth; "for I am determined he shall yet dance at my wedding. Would that I could win him to our cause! it is the cause of his country; and I could fight with more pleasure, Frances, with your brother by my side."

"Oh! mention it not! you awaken terrible reflections."

"I will not mention it," returned her husband; "but I must now leave you. But the sooner I go, Frances, the sooner I shall return."

The noise of a horseman was heard approaching the house, and Dunwoodie was yet taking leave of his bride and her aunt, when an officer was shown into the room by his own man.

The gentleman wore the dress of an aid-de-camp, and

the major at once knew him to be one of the military family of Washington.

"Major Dunwoodie," he said, after bowing to the ladies, "the commander-in-chief has directed me to give you these orders."

He executed his mission, and, pleading duty, took his leave immediately.

"Here, indeed!" cried the major, "is an unexpected túrn in the whole affair; but I understand it; Harper has got my letter, and already we feel his influence."

"Have you news affecting Henry?" cried Frances, springing to his side.

"Listen, and you shall judge."

"SIR, — Upon the receipt of this, you will concentrate your squadron, so as to be in front of a covering party which the enemy has sent up in front of his foragers, by ten o'clock to-morrow, on the heights of Croton, where you will find a body of foot to support you. The escape of the English spy has been reported to me, but his arrest is unimportant, compared with the duty I now assign you. You will, therefore, recall your men, if any are in pursuit, and endeavor to defeat the enemy forthwith.

"Your obedient servant,

"GEO. WASHINGTON."

"Thank God!" cried Dunwoodie, "my hands are washed of Henry's recapture; I can now move to my duty with honor."

"And with prudence too, dear Peyton," said Frances, with a face as pale as death; "remember, Dunwoodie, you leave behind you new claims on your life."

The youth dwelt on her lovely but pallid features with rapture; and, as he folded her to his heart, exclaimed, —

"For your sake, I will, lovely innocent!" Frances sobbed a moment on his bosom, and he tore himself from her presence.

Miss Peyton retired with her niece, to whom she conceived it necessary, before they separated for the night, to

give an admonitory lecture on the subject of matrimonial duty. Her instruction was modestly received, if not properly digested. We regret that history has not handed down to us this precious dissertation; but the result of all our investigation has been to learn that it partook largely of those peculiarities which are said to tincture the rules prescribed to govern bachelors' children. We shall now leave the ladies of the Wharton family, and return to Captain Wharton and Harvey Birch.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Allow him not a parting word;
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!

ROKEBY.

THE PEDLER and his companion soon reached the valley, and after pausing to listen, and hearing no sounds which announced that pursuers were abroad, they entered the highway. Acquainted with every step that led through the mountains, and possessed of sinews inured to toil, Birch led the way, with the lengthened strides that were peculiar to the man and his profession; his pack alone was wanting to finish the appearance of his ordinary business air. At times, when they approached one of those little posts held by the American troops, with which the Highlands abounded, he would take a circuit to avoid the sentinels, and plunge fearlessly into a thicket, or ascend a rugged hill, that to the eye seemed impassable. But the pedler was familiar with every turn in their difficult route, knew where the ravines might be penetrated, or where the streams were fordable. In one or two instances, Henry thought that their further progress was absolutely at an end, but the ingenuity, or knowledge, of his guide, conquered every difficulty. After walking at a great rate for three hours, they suddenly diverged from the road, which inclined to the east, and held their course directly across the hills, in a due south direction. This movement was made, the pedler informed his companion, in order to avoid the parties who constantly patrolled in the southern entrance of the Highlands, as well as to shorten the distance, by travelling in a straight line. After reaching the summit of a hill, Harvey seated himself by the side of a little run, and opening a wallet, that he had slung where his pack was commonly

suspended, he invited his comrade to partake of the coarse fare it contained. Henry had kept pace with the pedler, more by the excitement natural to his situation, than by the equality of his physical powers. The idea of a halt was unpleasant, so long as there existed a possibility of the horse getting below him, in time to intercept their retreat through the neutral ground. He therefore stated his apprehensions to his companion, and urged a wish to proceed.

"Follow my example, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, commencing his frugal meal; "if the horse have started, it will be more than man can do to head them; and if they have not, work is cut out for them, that will drive all thoughts of you and me from their brains."

"You said yourself, that two hours' detention was all-important to us, and if we loiter here, of what use will be the advantage that we may have already obtained?"

"The time is past, and Major Dunwoodie thinks little of following two men, when hundreds are waiting for him on the banks of the river."

"Listen!" interrupted Henry; "there are horse at this moment passing the foot of the hill. I hear them even laughing and talking to each other. Hist! there is the voice of Dunwoodie himself; he calls to his comrade in a manner that shows but little uneasiness. One would think that the situation of his friend would lower his spirits; surely Frances could not have given him the letter."

On hearing the first exclamation of the captain, Birch arose from his seat, and approached cautiously to the brow of the hill, taking care to keep his body in the shadow of the rocks, so as to be unseen at any distance, and earnestly reconnoitered the group of passing horsemen. He continued listening, until their quick footsteps were no longer audible, and then quietly returned to his seat, and with incomparable coolness resumed his meal.

"You have a long walk, and a tiresome one, before you, Captain Wharton; you had better do as I do — you were eager for food at the hut above Fishkill, but travelling seems to have worn down your appetite."

"I thought myself safe, then, but the information of my sister fills me with uneasiness, and I cannot eat."

"You have less reason to be troubled now than at any time since the night before you were taken, when you refused my advice, and an offer to see you in, in safety," returned the pedler. "Major Dunwoodie is not a man to laugh and be gay, when his friend is in difficulty. Come, then, and eat, for no horse will be in our way, if we can hold our legs for four hours longer, and the sun keeps behind the hills as long as common."

There was a composure in the pedler's manner that encouraged his companion; and having once determined to submit to Harvey's government, he suffered himself to be persuaded into a tolerable supper, if quantity be considered without any reference to the quality. After completing their repast, the pedler resumed his journey.

Henry followed in blind submission to his will. For two hours more they struggled with the difficult and dangerous passes of the Highlands, without road, or any other guide than the moon, which was travelling the heavens, now wading through flying clouds, and now shining brightly. At length they arrived at a point where the mountains sunk into rough and unequal hillocks, and passed at once from the barren sterility of the precipices, to the imperfect culture of the neutral ground.

The pedler now became more guarded in the manner in which they proceeded, and took divers precautions to prevent meeting any moving parties of the Americans. With the stationary posts he was too familiar to render it probable he might fall upon any of them unawares. He wound among the hills and vales, now keeping the highways and now avoiding them, with a precision that seemed instinctive. There was nothing elastic in his tread, but he glided over the ground with enormous strides, and a body bent forward, without appearing to use exertion, or know weariness.

The moon had set, and a faint streak of light was beginning to show itself in the east. Captain Wharton ventured to express a sense of fatigue, and to inquire if they were not yet arrived at a part of the country where it might be safe to apply at some of the farm-houses for admission.

"See here," said the pedler, pointing to a hill, at a short

distance in their rear; "do you not see a man walking on the point of that rock? Turn, so as to bring the daylight in the range — now, see, he moves, and seems to be looking earnestly at something to the eastward. That is a royal sentinel; two hundred of the rig'lar troops lay on that hill, no doubt sleeping on their arms."

"Then," cried Henry, "let us join them, and our danger is ended."

"Softly, softly, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, dryly, "you've once been in the midst of three hundred of them, but there was a man who could take you out; see you not yon dark body, on the side of the opposite hill, just above the corn-stalks? There are the — the rebels (since that is the word for us loyal subjects), waiting only for day, to see who will be master of the ground."

"Nay, then," exclaimed the fiery youth, "I will join the troops of my prince, and share their fortune, be it good or be it bad."

"You forget that you fight with a halter round your neck; no, no — I have promised one whom I must not disappoint, to carry you safe in; and unless you forget what I have already done, and what I have risked for you, Captain Wharton, you will turn and follow me to Harlaem."

To this appeal the youth felt unwillingly obliged to submit; and they continued their course towards the city. It was not long before they gained the banks of the Hudson. After searching for a short time under the shore, the pedler discovered a skiff, that appeared to be an old acquaintance; and entering it with his companion, he landed him on the south side of the Croton. Here Birch declared they were in safety; for the royal troops held the continentals at bay, and the former were out in too great strength, for the light parties of the latter to trust themselves below that river, on the immediate banks of the Hudson.

Throughout the whole of this arduous flight, the pedler had manifested a coolness and presence of mind that nothing appeared to disturb. All his faculties seemed to be of more than usual perfection, and the infirmities of nature to have no dominion over him. Henry had followed him

like a child in leading-strings, and he now reaped his reward, as he felt a bound of pleasure at his heart, on hearing that he was relieved from apprehension, and permitted to banish every doubt of security.

A steep and laborious ascent brought them from the level of the tide-waters to the high lands that form, in this part of the river, the eastern banks of the Hudson. Retiring a little from the highway, under the shelter of a thicket of cedars, the pedler threw his form on a flat rock, and announced to his companion that the hour for rest and refreshment was at length arrived. The day was now opened, and objects could be seen in the distance, with distinctness. Beneath them lay the Hudson, stretching to the south in a straight line, as far as the eye could reach. To the north, the broken fragments of the Highlands threw upwards their lofty heads, above masses of fog that hung over the water, and by which the course of the river could be traced into the bosom of hills whose conical summits were grouping together, one behind another, in that disorder which might be supposed to have succeeded their gigantic, but fruitless, efforts to stop the progress of the flood. Emerging from these confused piles, the river, as if rejoicing at its release from the struggle, expanded into a wide bay, which was ornamented by a few fertile and low points that jutted humbly into its broad basin. On the opposite, or western shore, the rocks of Jersey were gathered into an array that has obtained for them the name of the "Palisades," elevating themselves for many hundred feet, as if to protect the rich country in their rear from the inroads of the conqueror; but, disdaining such an enemy, the river swept proudly by their feet, and held its undeviating way to the ocean. A ray of the rising sun darted upon the slight cloud that hung over the placid river, and at once the whole scene was in motion, changing and assuming new forms, and exhibiting fresh objects in each successive moment. At the daily rising of this great curtain of nature, at the present time, scores of white sails and sluggish vessels are seen thickening on the water, with that air of life which denotes the neighborhood to the metropolis of a great and flourishing

empire; but to Henry and the pedler it displayed only the square yards and lofty masts of a vessel of war, riding a few miles below them. Before the fog had begun to move, the tall spars were seen above it, and from one of them a long pennant was feebly borne abroad in the current of night air, that still quivered along the river; but as the smoke arose, the black hull, the crowded and complicated mass of rigging, and the heavy yards and booms, spreading their arms afar, were successively brought into view.

"There, Captain Wharton," said the pedler, "there is a safe resting-place for you; America has no arm that can reach you, if you gain the deck of that ship. She is sent up to cover the foragers, and support the troops; the rig'lar officers are fond of the sound of cannon from their shipping."

Without condescending to reply to the sarcasm conveyed in this speech, or perhaps not noticing it, Henry joyfully acquiesced in the proposal, and it was accordingly arranged between them, that, as soon as they were refreshed, he should endeavor to get on board the vessel.

While busily occupied in the very indispensable operation of breaking their fast, our adventurers were startled with the sound of distant fire-arms. At first a few scattering shots were fired, which were succeeded by a long and animated roll of musketry, and then quick and heavy volleys followed each other.

"Your prophecy is made good," cried the English officer, springing upon his feet. "Our troops and the rebels are at it! I would give six months' pay to see the charge."

"Umph!" returned his companion, without ceasing his meal; "they do very well to look at from a distance; I can't say but the company of this bacon, cold as it is, is more to my taste, just now, than a hot fire from the continentals."

"The discharges are heavy for so small a force; but the fire seems irregular."

"The scattering guns are from the Connecticut militia," said Harvey, raising his head to listen; "they rattle it off finely, and are no fools at a mark. The volleys are the

rig'lars, who, you know, fire by word — as long as they can."

"I like not the warmth of what you call a scattering fire," exclaimed the captain, moving about with uneasiness; "it is more like the roll of a drum than the shooting of skirmishers."

"No, no; I said not skrimmagers," returned the other, raising himself upon a knee, and ceasing to eat; "so long as they stand, they are too good for the best troops in the royal army. Each man does his work as if fighting by the job; and then, they think while they fight, and don't send bullets among the clouds, that were meant to kill men upon earth."

"You talk and look, sir, as if you wished them success," said Henry, sternly.

"I wish success to the good cause only, Captain Wharton. I thought you knew me too well, to be uncertain which party I favored."

"Oh! you are reputed loyal, Mr. Birch. But the volleys have ceased!"

Both now listened intently for a little while, during which the irregular reports became less brisk, and suddenly heavy and repeated volleys followed.

"They've been at the bayonet," said the pedler; "the rig'lars have tried the bayonet, and the rebels are driven."

"Aye, Mr. Birch, the bayonet is the thing for the British soldier, after all. They delight in the bayonet!"

"Well, to my notion," said the pedler, "there's but little delight to be taken in any such fearful weapon. I dare say the militia are of my mind, for half of them don't carry the ugly things. Lord! Lord! captain, I wish you'd go with me once into the rebel camp, and hear what lies the men will tell about Bunker Hill and Burg'yne; you'd think they loved the bayonet as much as they do their dinners."

There was a chuckle, and an air of affected innocency about his companion, that rather annoyed Henry, and he did not deign to reply.

The firing now became desultory, occasionally intermingled with heavy volleys. Both of the fugitives were

standing, listening with much anxiety, when a man, armed with a musket, was seen stealing towards them, under the shelter of the cedar bushes, that partially covered the hill. Henry first observed this suspicious-looking stranger, and instantly pointed him out to his companion. Birch started, and certainly made an indication of sudden flight; but recollecting himself, he stood, in sullen silence, until the stranger was within a few yards of them.

"'Tis friends," said the fellow, clubbing his gun, but apparently afraid to venture nearer.

"You had better retire," said Birch; "here are rig'lars at hand. We are not near Dunwoodie's horse now, and you will not find me an easy prize to-day."

"Damn Major Dunwoodie and his horse!" cried the leader of the Skinners (for it was he); "God bless King George! and a speedy end to the rebellion, say I. If you would show me the safe way in to the refugees, Mr. Birch, I'll pay you well, and ever after stand your friend, in the bargain."

"The road is as open to you as to me," said Birch, turning from him in ill-concealed disgust; "if you want to find the refugees, you know well where they lay."

"Aye, but I'm a little doubtful of going in upon them by myself; now, you are well known to them all, and it will be no detriment to you just to let me go in with you."

Henry here interfered, and after holding a short dialogue with the fellow, he entered into a compact with him, that, on condition of surrendering his arms, he might join the party. The man complied instantly, and Birch received his gun with eagerness; nor did he lay it upon his shoulder to renew their march, before he had carefully examined the priming, and ascertained, to his satisfaction, that it contained a good dry ball-cartridge.

As soon as this engagement was completed, they commenced their journey anew. By following the bank of the river, Birch led the way free from observation, until they reached the point opposite to the frigate, when, by making a signal, a boat was induced to approach. Some time was spent, and much precaution used, before the seamen would

trust themselves ashore; but Henry having finally succeeded in making the officer who commanded the party credit his assertions, he was able to rejoin his companions in arms in safety. Before taking leave of Birch, the captain handed him his purse, which was tolerably well supplied for the times; the pedler received it, and, watching an opportunity, he conveyed it, unnoticed by the Skinner, to a part of his dress that was ingeniously contrived to hold such treasures.

The boat pulled from the shore, and Birch turned on his heel, drawing his breath, like one relieved, and shot up the hills with the strides for which he was famous. The Skinner followed, and each party pursued the common course, casting frequent and suspicious glances at the other, and both maintaining a most impenetrable silence.

Wagons were moving along the river road, and occasional parties of horse were seen escorting the fruits of the inroad towards the city. As the pedler had views of his own, he rather avoided falling in with any of these patrols, than sought their protection. But, after travelling a few miles on the immediate banks of the river, during which, notwithstanding the repeated efforts of the Skinner to establish something like sociability, he maintained a most determined silence, keeping a firm hold of the gun, and always maintaining a jealous watchfulness of his associate, the pedler suddenly struck into the highway, with an intention of crossing the hills towards Harlaem. At the moment he gained the path, a body of horse came over a little eminence, and was upon him before he perceived them. It was too late to retreat, and after taking a view of the materials that composed this party, Birch rejoiced in the rencontre, as a probable means of relieving him from his unwelcome companion. There were some eighteen or twenty men, mounted and equipped as dragoons, though neither their appearance nor manners denoted much discipline. At their head rode a heavy, middle-aged man, whose features expressed as much of animal courage, and as little of reason, as could be desired for such an occupation. He wore the dress of an officer, but there was none of that neatness

in his attire, nor grace in his movements, that was usually found about the gentlemen who bore the royal commission. His limbs were firm, and not pliable, and he sat his horse with strength and confidence, but his bridle-hand would have been ridiculed by the meanest rider amongst the Virginians. As he expected, this leader instantly hailed the pedler, in a voice by no means more conciliating than his appearance.

"Hey! my gentlemen, which way so fast?" he cried. "Has Washington sent you down as spies?"

"I am an innocent pedler," returned Harvey, meekly, "and am going below, to lay in a fresh stock of goods."

"And how do you expect to get below, my innocent pedler? Do you think we hold the forts at King's Bridge to cover such peddling rascals as you, in your goings in, and comings out?"

"I believe I hold a pass that will carry me through," said the pedler, handing him a paper, with an air of great indifference.

The officer, for such he was, read it, and cast a look of surprise and curiosity at Harvey, when he had done.

Then turning to one or two of his men, who had officiously stopped the way, he cried, —

"Why do you detain the man? give way, and let him pass in peace: but whom have we here? your name is not mentioned in the pass!"

"No, sir," said the Skinner, lifting his hat with humility; "I have been a poor deluded man, who has been serving in the rebel army; but, thank God, I've lived to see the error of my ways, and am now come to make reparation, by enlisting under the Lord's anointed."

"Umph! a deserter — a Skinner, I'll swear, wanting to turn Cow-Boy! In the last brush I had with the scoundrels, I could hardly tell my own men from the enemy. We are not over well supplied with coats, and as for countenances, the rascals change sides so often, that you may as well count their faces for nothing; but trudge on, we will contrive to make use of you, sooner or later."

Ungracious as was this reception, if you could judge of

the Skinner's feelings from his manner, it nevertheless delighted him. He moved with alacrity towards the city, and really was so happy to escape the brutal looks and frightful manner of his interrogator, as to lose sight of all other considerations. But the man who performed the functions of orderly in the irregular troop, rode up to the side of his commander, and commenced a close and apparently a confidential discourse with his principal. They spoke in whispers, and cast frequent and searching glances at the Skinner, until the fellow began to think himself an object of more than common attention. His satisfaction at this distinction was somewhat heightened, at observing a smile on the face of the captain, which, although it might be thought grim, certainly denoted satisfaction. This pantomime occupied the time they were passing a hollow, and concluded as they rose another hill. Here the captain and his sergeant both dismounted, and ordered the party to halt. The two partisans each took a pistol from his holster, a movement that excited no suspicion or alarm, as it was a precaution always observed, and beckoned to the pedler and the Skinner to follow. A short walk brought them to a spot where the hill overhung the river, the ground falling nearly perpendicularly to the shore. On the brow of the eminence stood a deserted and dilapidated barn. Many boards of its covering were torn from their places, and its wide doors were lying, the one in front of the building, and the other halfway down the precipice, whither the wind had cast it. Entering this desolate spot, the refugee officer very coolly took from his pocket a short pipe, which, from long use, had acquired not only the hue but the gloss of ebony, a tobacco-box, and a small roll of leather, that contained steel, flint, and tinder. With this apparatus, he soon furnished his mouth with a companion that habit had long rendered necessary to reflection. So soon as a large column of smoke arose from this arrangement, the captain significantly held forth a hand towards his assistant. A small cord was produced from the pocket of the sergeant, and handed to the other. The refugee threw out vast puffs of smoke, until nearly all of his head was obscured, and looked around the

building with an inquisitive eye. At length he removed the pipe, and inhaling a draught of pure air, returned it to its domicile, and proceeded at once to business. A heavy piece of timber lay across the girths of the barn, but a little way from the southern door, which opened directly upon a full view of the river, as it stretched far away towards the bay of New York. Over this beam the refugee threw one end of the rope, and, regaining it, joined the two parts in his hand. A small and weak barrel, that wanted a head, the staves of which were loose, and at one end standing apart, was left on the floor, probably as useless. The sergeant, in obedience to a look from his officer, placed it beneath the beam. All of these arrangements were made with immovable composure, and they now seemed completed to the officer's perfect satisfaction.

"Come," he said coolly to the Skinner, who, admiring the preparations, had stood a silent spectator of their progress. He obeyed; and it was not until he found his neckcloth removed, and hat thrown aside, that he took the alarm. But he had so often resorted to a similar expedient to extort information, or plunder, that he by no means felt the terror an unpracticed man would have suffered, at these ominous movements. The rope was adjusted to his neck with the same coolness that formed the characteristic of the whole movement, and a fragment of board being laid upon the barrel, he was ordered to mount.

"But it may fall," said the Skinner, for the first time beginning to tremble. "I will tell you anything — even how to surprise our party at the Pond, without all this trouble, and it is commanded by my own brother."

"I want no information," returned his executioner (for such he now seemed really to be), throwing the rope repeatedly over the beam, first drawing it tight so as to annoy the Skinner a little, and then casting the end from him, beyond the reach of any one.

"This is joking too far," cried the Skinner, in a tone of remonstrance, and raising himself on his toes, with the vain hope of releasing himself from the cord, by slipping his head through the noose. But the caution and experience of the refugee officer had guarded against this escape.

"What have you done with the horse you stole from me, rascal?" muttered the officer of the Cow-Boys, throwing out columns of smoke while he waited for a reply.

"He broke down in the chase," replied the Skinner, quickly; "but I can tell you where one is to be found that is worth him and his sire."

"Liar! I will help myself when I am in need; you had better call upon God for aid, as your hour is short." On concluding this consoling advice, he struck the barrel a violent blow with his heavy foot, and the slender staves flew in every direction, leaving the Skinner whirling in the air. As his hands were unconfined, he threw them upwards, and held himself suspended by main strength.

"Come, captain," he said, coaxingly, a little huskiness creeping into his voice, and his knees beginning to shake with tremor, "end the joke; 'tis enough to make a laugh, and my arms begin to tire — I can't hold on much longer."

"Harkee, Mr. Pedler," said the refugee, in a voice that would not be denied, "I want not your company. Through that door lies your road — march! offer to touch that dog, and you'll swing in his place, though twenty Sir Henrys wanted your services." So saying, he retired to the road with the sergeant, as the pedler precipitately retreated down the bank.

Birch went no farther than a bush that opportunely offered itself as a screen to his person, while he yielded to an unconquerable desire to witness the termination of this extraordinary scene.

Left alone, the Skinner began to throw fearful glances around, to espy the hiding-places of his tormentors. For the first time the horrid idea seemed to shoot through his brain that something serious was intended by the Cow-Boy. He called entreatingly to be released, and made rapid and incoherent promises of important information, mingled with affected pleasantry at their conceit, which he would hardly admit to himself could mean anything so dreadful as it seemed. But as he heard the tread of the horses moving on their course, and in vain looked around for human aid, violent trembling seized his limbs, and his eyes began to

start from his head with terror. He made a desperate effort to reach the beam; but, too much exhausted with his previous exertions, he caught the rope in his teeth, in a vain effort to sever the cord, and fell to the whole length of his arms. Here his cries were turned into shrieks.

"Help! cut the rope! captain! — Birch! good pedler! Down with the Congress! — sergeant! for God's sake, help! Hurrah for the king! — O God! O God! — mercy mercy — mercy!"

As his voice became suppressed, one of his hands endeavored to make its way between the rope and his neck, and partially succeeded; but the other fell quivering by his side. A convulsive shuddering passed over his whole frame, and he hung a hideous corpse.

Birch continued gazing on this scene with a kind of infatuation. At its close he placed his hands to his ears, and rushed towards the highway. Still the cries for mercy rang through his brain, and it was many weeks before his memory ceased to dwell on the horrid event. The Cow-Boys rode steadily on their route, as if nothing had occurred; and the body was left swinging in the wind, until chance directed the footsteps of some straggler to the place.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days ;
None knew thee but to love thee,
None named thee but to praise.

HALLECK.

WHILE the scenes and events that we have recorded were occurring, Captain Lawton led his small party, by slow and wary marches, from the Four Corners to the front of a body of the enemy; where he so successfully manœuvered, for a short time, as completely to elude all their efforts to entrap him, and yet so disguised his own force as to excite the constant apprehension of an attack from the Americans. This forbearing policy, on the side of the partisan, was owing to positive orders received from his commander. When Dunwoodie left his detachment, the enemy were known to be slowly advancing, and he directed Lawton to hover around them, until his own return, and the arrival of a body of foot, might enable him to intercept their retreat.

The trooper discharged his duty to the letter, but with no little of the impatience that made part of his character when restrained from the attack.

During these movements, Betty Flanagan guided her little cart with indefatigable zeal among the rocks of West-Chester, now discussing with the sergeant the nature of evil spirits, and now combating with the surgeon sundry points of practice that were hourly arising between them. But the moment at length arrived that was to decide the temporary mastery of the field. A detachment of the eastern militia moved out from their fastnesses, and approached the enemy.

The junction between Lawton and his auxiliaries was made at midnight, and an immediate consultation was held

between him and the leader of the foot-soldiers. After listening to the statements of the partisan, who rather despised the prowess of his enemy, the commandant of the party determined to attack the British, the moment daylight enabled him to reconnoitre their position, without waiting for the aid of Dunwoodie and his horse. So soon as this decision was made, Lawton retired from the building where the consultation was held, and rejoined his own small command.

The few troopers who were with the captain had fastened their horses in a spot adjacent to a haystack, and laid their own frames under its shelter, to catch a few hours' sleep. But Dr. Sitgreaves, Sergeant Hollister, and Betty Flanagan were congregated at a short distance by themselves, having spread a few blankets upon the dry surface of a rock. Lawton threw his huge frame by the side of the surgeon, and folding his cloak about him, leaned his head upon one hand, and appeared deeply engaged in contemplating the moon as it waded through the heavens. The sergeant was sitting upright, in respectful deference to the surgeon, and the washerwoman was now raising her head, in order to vindicate some of her favorite maxims, and now composing it on one of her gin-casks, in a vain effort to sleep.

"So, sergeant," continued Sitgreaves, following up a previous position, "if you cut upwards, the blow, by losing the additional momentum of your weight, will be less destructive, and at the same time effect the true purpose of war, that of disabling your enemy."

"Pooh! pooh! sergeant dear," said the washerwoman, raising her head from the blanket; "where's the harm of taking a life, jist in the way of battle? Is it the rig'lars who'll show favor, and they fighting? Ask Captain Jack there, if the country could get the liberty, and the boys no strike their might. I wouldn't have them disparage the whiskey so much."

"It is not to be expected that an ignorant female like yourself, Mrs. Flanagan," returned the surgeon, with a calmness that only rendered his contempt more stinging to Betty, "can comprehend the distinctions of surgical science; neither

are you accomplished in the sword exercise; so that dissertations upon the judicious use of that weapon could avail you nothing, either in theory or in practice."

"It's but little I care, any way, for such botherment; but fighting is no play, and a body shouldn't be partic'lar how they strike, or who they hit, so it's the inimy."

"Are we likely to have a warm day, Captain Lawton?"

"'Tis more than probable," replied the trooper; "these militia seldom fail of making a bloody field, either by their cowardice or their ignorance, and the real soldier is made to suffer for their bad conduct."

"Are you ill, John?" said the surgeon, passing his hand along the arm of the captain, until it instinctively settled on his pulse; but the steady, even beat announced neither bodily nor mental malady.

"Sick at heart, Archibald, at the folly of our rulers, in believing that battles are to be fought, and victories won, by fellows who handle a musket as they would a flail; lads who wink when they pull a trigger, and form a line like a hoop-pole. The dependence we place on these men spills the best blood of the country."

The surgeon listened with amazement. It was not the matter, but the manner that surprised him. The trooper had uniformly exhibited, on the eve of battle, an animation, and an eagerness to engage, that was directly at variance with the admirable coolness of his manner at other times. But now there was a despondency in the tones of his voice, and a listlessness in his air, that was entirely different. The operator hesitated a moment, to reflect in what manner he could render this change of service in furthering his favorite system, and then continued, —

"It would be wise, John, to advise the colonel to keep at long shot; a spent ball will disable" —

"No!" exclaimed the trooper, impatiently; "let the rascals singe their whiskers at the muzzles of the British muskets, if they can be driven there. But, enough of them. Archibald, do you deem that moon to be a world like this, containing creatures like ourselves?"

"Nothing more probable, dear John; we know its size,

and, reasoning from analogy, may easily conjecture its use. Whether or not its inhabitants have attained to that perfection in the sciences which we have acquired, must depend greatly on the state of its society, and in some measure upon its physical influences."

"I care nothing about their learning, Archibald; but 'tis a wonderful power that can create such worlds, and control them in their wanderings. I know not why, but there is a feeling of melancholy excited within me as I gaze on that body of light, shaded as it is by your fancied sea and land. It seems to be the resting-place of departed spirits!"

"Take a drop, darling," said Betty, raising her head once more, and proffering her own bottle; "'tis the night damp that chills the blood — and then the talk with the cursed militia is no good for a fiery temper. Take a drop, darling, and ye'll sleep till the morning. I fed Roanoke myself, for I thought ye might need hard riding the morrow."

"'Tis a glorious heaven to look upon," continued the trooper, in the same tone, disregarding the offer of Betty, "and 'tis a thousand pities that such worms as men should let their vile passions deface such goodly work."

"You speak the truth, dear John; there is room for all to live and enjoy themselves in peace, if each could be satisfied with his own. Still, war has its advantages; it particularly promotes the knowledge of surgery; and" —

"There is a star," continued Lawton, still bent on his own ideas, "struggling to glitter through a few driving clouds; perhaps that too is a world, and contains its creatures endowed with reason like ourselves; think you that they know of war and bloodshed?"

"If I might be so bold," said Sergeant Hollister, mechanically raising his hand to his cap, "'tis mentioned in the good book, that the Lord made the sun to stand still while Joshua was charging the enemy, in order, sir, as I suppose, that they might have daylight to turn their flank, or perhaps make a feint in the rear, or some such manœuvre. Now, if the Lord would lend them a hand, fighting cannot be sinful. I have often been nonplushed, though, to find that they used them chariots instead of heavy dragoons, who

are, in all comparison, better to break a line of infantry, and who, for the matter of that, could turn such wheel-carriages, and, getting into the rear, play the very devil with them horse and all."

"It is because you do not understand the construction of those ancient vehicles, Sergeant Hollister, that you judge of them so erroneously," said the surgeon. "They were armed with sharp weapons that protruded from their wheels, and which broke up the columns of foot, like dismembered particles of matter. I doubt not, if similar instruments were affixed to the cart of Mrs. Flanagan, that great confusion might be carried into the ranks of the enemy thereby, this very day."

"It's but little that the mare would go, and the rig'lars firing at her," grumbled Betty, from under her blanket; "when we got the plunder, the time we drove them through the Jarseys it was, I had to back the baste up to the dead; for the divil the foot would she move, forenent the firing, wid her eyes open. Roanoke and Captain Jack are good enough for the red-coats, letting alone myself and the mare."

A long roll of the drums, from the hill occupied by the British, announced that they were on the alert; and a corresponding signal was immediately heard from the Americans. The bugle of the Virginians struck up its martial tones; and in a few moments both the hills, the one held by the royal troops, and the other by their enemies, were alive with armed men. Day had begun to dawn, and preparations were making by both parties, to give and to receive the attack. In numbers the Americans had greatly the advantage; but in discipline and equipments the superiority was entirely with their enemies. The arrangements for the battle were brief, and by the time the sun had risen the militia moved forward.

The ground did not admit of the movements of horse; and the only duty that could be assigned to the dragoons was to watch the moment of victory, and endeavor to improve the success to the utmost. Lawton soon got his warriors into the saddle; and leaving them to the charge of Hollister, he rode himself along the line of foot, who

in varied dresses, and imperfectly armed, were formed in a shape that in some degree resembled a martial array. A scornful smile lowered about the lip of the trooper as he guided Roanoke with a skillful hand through the windings of their ranks; and when the word was given to march, he turned the flank of the regiment, and followed close in the rear. The Americans had to descend into a little hollow, and rise a hill on its opposite side, to approach the enemy.

The descent was made with tolerable steadiness, until near the foot of the hill, when the royal troops advanced in a beautiful line, with their flanks protected by the formation of the ground. The appearance of the British drew a fire from the militia, which was given with good effect, and for a moment staggered the regulars. But they were rallied by their officers, and threw in volley after volley with great steadiness. For a short time the fire was warm and destructive, until the English advanced with the bayonet. This assault the militia had not sufficient discipline to withstand. Their line wavered, then paused, and finally broke into companies and fragments of companies, keeping up at the same time a scattering and desultory fire.

Lawton witnessed these operations in silence, nor did he open his mouth until the field was covered with parties of the flying Americans. Then, indeed, he seemed stung with the disgrace thus heaped upon the arms of his country. Spurring Roanoke along the side of the hill, he called to the fugitives in all the strength of his powerful voice. He pointed to the enemy, and assured his countrymen that they had mistaken the way. There was such a mixture of indifference and irony in his exhortations, that a few paused in surprise — more joined them, until, roused by the example of the trooper, and stimulated by their own spirit, they demanded to be led against their foe once more.

"Come on, then, my brave friends!" shouted the trooper, turning his horse's head towards the British line, one flank of which was very near him; "come on, and hold your fire until it will scorch their eyebrows."

The men sprang forward, and followed his example, neither giving nor receiving a fire until they had come

within a very short distance of the enemy. An English sergeant, who had been concealed by a rock, enraged with the audacity of the officer who thus dared their arms, stepped from behind his cover, and advancing within a few yards of the trooper, leveled his musket.

"Fire, and you die!" cried Lawton, spurring his charger, which leaped forward at the instant. The action and the tone of his voice shook the nerves of the Englishman, who drew his trigger with an uncertain aim. Roanoke sprang with all his feet from the earth, and, plunging, fell headlong and lifeless at the feet of his destroyer. Lawton kept his feet, standing face to face with his enemy. The latter presented his bayonet, and made a desperate thrust at the trooper's heart. The steel of their weapons emitted sparks of fire, and the bayonet flew fifty feet in the air. At the next moment its owner lay a quivering corpse.

"Come on!" shouted the trooper, as a body of English appeared on the rock, and threw in a close fire; "come on!" he repeated, and brandished his sabre fiercely. Then his gigantic form fell backward, like a majestic pine yielding to the axe; but still, as he slowly fell, he continued to wield his sabre, and once more the deep tones of his voice were heard uttering, "Come on!"

The advancing Americans paused aghast, and, turning, they abandoned the field to the royal troops.

It was neither the intention nor the policy of the English commander to pursue his success, for he well knew that strong parties of the Americans would soon arrive; accordingly, he only tarried to collect his wounded, and, forming in a square, he commenced his retreat towards the shipping. Within twenty minutes of the fall of Lawton, the ground was deserted by both English and Americans.

When the inhabitants of the country were called upon to enter the field, they were necessarily attended by such surgical advisers as were furnished by the low state of the profession in the interior at that day. Dr. Sitgreaves entertained quite as profound a contempt for the medical attendants of the militia as the captain did of the troops themselves. He wandered, therefore, around the field,

casting many a glance of disapprobation at the slight operations that came under his eye; but when, among the flying troops, he found that his comrade and friend was nowhere to be seen, he hastened back to the spot at which Hollister was posted, to inquire if the trooper had returned. Of course, the answer was in the negative. Filled with a thousand uneasy conjectures, the surgeon, without regarding, or indeed without at all reflecting upon any dangers that might lie in his way, strode over the ground at an enormous rate, to the point where he knew the final struggle had been. Once before, the surgeon had rescued his friend from death in a similar situation; and he felt a secret joy in his own conscious skill, as he perceived Betty Flanagan seated on the ground, holding in her lap the head of a man whose size and dress he knew could belong only to the trooper. As he approached the spot, the surgeon became alarmed at the aspect of the washerwoman. Her little black bonnet was thrown aside, and her hair, which was already streaked with gray, hung around her face in disorder.

"John! dear John!" said the doctor, tenderly, as he bent and laid his hand upon the senseless wrist of the trooper, from which it recoiled with an intuitive knowledge of his fate; "John! dear John! where are you hurt?—can I help you?"

"Ye talk to the senseless clay," said Betty, rocking her body, and unconsciously playing with the raven ringlets of the trooper's hair; "it's no more will he hear, and it's but little will he mind ye're probes and ye're med'cines. Och hone, och hone!—and where will be the liberty now? or who will there be to fight the battle, or gain the day?"

"John!" repeated the surgeon, still unwilling to believe the evidence of his unerring senses, "dear John, speak to me; say what you will, that you do but speak. Oh, God! he is dead; would that I had died with him!"

"There is but little use in living and fighting now," said Betty; "both him and the baste! see, there is the poor cratur, and here is the master! I fed the horse with my own hands, the day; and the last male that *he* ate was of

my own cooking. Och hone! och hone!—that Captain Jack should live to be killed by the rig'lars!"

"John! my dear John!" said the surgeon, with convulsive sobs, "thy hour has come, and many a more prudent man survives thee; but none better, nor braver. Oh! John, thou wert to me a kind friend, and very dear: it is unphilosophical to grieve; but for thee, John, I must weep, even in bitterness of heart!"

The doctor buried his face in his hands, and for several minutes sat yielding to an ungovernable burst of sorrow; while the washerwoman gave vent to her grief in words, moving her body in a kind of writhing, and playing with different parts of her favorite's dress with her fingers.

"And who'll there be to incourage the boys now?" she said. "Oh! Captain Jack! Captain Jack! ye was the sowl of the troop, and it was but little we knowed of the danger, and ye fighting. Och! he was no maly mouthed, that quarreled wid a widowed woman for the matter of a burn in the mate, or the want of a breakfast. Taste a drop, darling, and it may be, 'twill revive ye. Och! and he'll nivir taste ag'in; here's the doctor, honey, him ye used to blarney wid, wapeing as if the poor sowl would die for ye Och! he's gone, he's gone; and the liberty is gone wid him."

A thundering sound of horses' feet came rolling along the road which led near the place where Lawton lay, and directly the whole body of Virginians appeared, with Dunwoodie at their head. The news of the captain's fate had reached him; for the instant that he saw the body he halted the squadron, and, dismounting, approached the spot. The countenance of Lawton was not in the least distorted, but the angry frown which had lowered over his brow during the battle was fixed even in death. His frame was composed, and stretched as in sleep. Dunwoodie took hold of his hand, and gazed a moment in silence; his own dark eye kindled, and the paleness which had overspread his features was succeeded by a spot of deep red in either cheek.

"With his own sword will I avenge him!" he cried,

endeavoring to take the weapon from the hand of Lawton; but the grasp resisted his utmost strength. "It shall be buried with him. Sitgreaves, take care of our friend, while I revenge his death."

The major hastened back to his charger, and led the way in pursuit of the enemy.

While Dunwoodie had been thus engaged, the body of Lawton lay in open view of the whole squadron. He was a universal favorite, and the sight inflamed the men to the utmost: neither officers nor soldiers possessed that coolness which is necessary to ensure success in military operations; but they spurred ardently after their enemies, burning with a wish for vengeance.

The English were formed in a hollow square, which contained their wounded, who were far from numerous, and were marching steadily across a very uneven country as the dragoons approached. The horse charged in column, and were led by Dunwoodie, who, burning with revenge, thought to ride through their ranks, and scatter them at a blow. But the enemy knew their own strength too well, and, standing firm, they received the charge on the points of their bayonets. The horses of the Virginians recoiled, and the rear rank of the foot throwing in a close fire, the major, with a few men, fell. The English continued their retreat the moment they were extricated from their assailants; and Dunwoodie, who was severely, but not dangerously wounded, recalled his men from further attempts, which, in that stony country, must necessarily be fruitless.

A sad duty remained to be fulfilled. The dragoons retired slowly through the hills, conveying their wounded commander, and the body of Lawton. The latter they interred under the ramparts of one of the Highland forts, and the former they consigned to the tender care of his afflicted bride.

Many weeks were gone before the major was restored to sufficient strength to be removed. During those weeks, how often did he bless the moment that gave him a right to the services of his beautiful nurse! She hung around his couch with fond attention; administered with her own

hands every prescription of the indefatigable Sitgreaves, and grew each hour in the affections and esteem of her husband. An order from Washington soon sent the troops into winter quarters, and permission was given to Dunwoodie to repair to his own plantation, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, in order to complete the restoration of his health. Captain Singleton made one of the party; and the whole family retired from the active scenes of the war, to the ease and plenty of the major's own estate. Before leaving Fishkill, however, letters were conveyed to them, through an unknown hand, acquainting them with Henry's safety and good health; and also that Colonel Wellmere had left the continent for his native island, lowered in the estimation of every honest man in the royal army.

It was a happy winter for Dunwoodie, and smiles once more began to play around the lovely mouth of Frances.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

'Midst furs, and silks, and jewels' sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring;
And Snowdon's knight is Scotland's king!
LADY OF THE LAKE.

THE commencement of the following year was passed, on the part of the Americans, in making great preparations, in conjunction with their allies, to bring the war to a close. In the south, Greene and Rawdon made a bloody campaign, that was highly honorable to the troops of the latter, but which, by terminating entirely to the advantage of the former, proved him to be the better general of the two.

New York was the point that was threatened by the allied armies; and Washington, by exciting a constant apprehension for the safety of that city, prevented such reinforcements from being sent to Cornwallis as would have enabled him to improve his success.

At length, as autumn approached, every indication was given that the final moment had arrived.

The French forces drew near to the royal lines, passing through the neutral ground, and threatened an attack in the direction of King's Bridge, while large bodies of Americans were acting in concert. By hovering around the British posts, and drawing nigh in the Jerseys, they seemed to threaten the royal forces from that quarter also. The preparations partook of the nature of both a siege and a storm. But Sir Henry Clinton, in the possession of intercepted letters from Washington, rested securely within his lines, and cautiously disregarded the solicitations of Cornwallis for succor.

It was at the close of a stormy day in the month of

September, that a large assemblage of officers was collected near the door of a building that was situated in the heart of the American troops, who held the Jerseys. The age, the dress, and the dignity of deportment of most of these warriors, indicated them to be of high rank: but to one in particular was paid a deference and obedience that announced him to be of the highest. His dress was plain, but it bore the usual military distinctions of command. He was mounted on a noble animal, of a deep bay; and a group of young men, in gayer attire, evidently awaited his pleasure, and did his bidding. Many a hat was lifted as its owner addressed this officer; and when he spoke, a profound attention, exceeding the respect of mere professional etiquette, was exhibited on every countenance. At length the general raised his own hat, and bowed gravely to all around him. The salute was returned, and the party dispersed, leaving the officer without a single attendant, except his body-servants and one aid-de-camp. Dismounting, he stepped back a few paces, and for a moment viewed the condition of his horse with the eye of one who well understood the animal, and then, casting a brief but expressive glance at his aid, he retired into the building, followed by that gentleman.

On entering an apartment that was apparently fitted for his reception, he took a seat, and continued for a long time in a thoughtful attitude, like one in the habit of communing much with himself. During this silence, the aid-de-camp stood in expectation of his orders. At length the general raised his eyes, and spoke in those low placid tones that seemed natural to him.

"Has the man whom I wished to see arrived, sir?"

"He waits the pleasure of your excellency."

"I will receive him here, and alone, if you please."

The aid bowed and withdrew. In a few minutes the door again opened, and a figure, gliding into the apartment, stood modestly at a distance from the general, without speaking. His entrance was unheard by the officer, who sat gazing at the fire, still absorbed in his own meditations. Several minutes passed, when he spoke to himself in an undertone, —

"To-morrow we must raise the curtain, and expose our plans. May Heaven prosper them!"

A slight movement made by the stranger caught his ear, and he turned his head, and saw that he was not alone. He pointed silently to the fire, towards which the figure advanced, although the multitude of his garments, which seemed more calculated for disguise than comfort, rendered its warmth unnecessary. A second mild and courteous gesture motioned to a vacant chair, but the stranger refused it with a modest acknowledgment. Another pause followed, and continued for some time. At length the officer arose, and opening a desk that was laid upon the table near which he sat, took from it a small, but apparently heavy bag.

"Harvey Birch," he said, turning to the stranger, "the time has arrived when our connection must cease; henceforth and forever we must be strangers."

The pedler dropped the folds of the great-coat that concealed his features, and gazed for a moment earnestly at the face of the speaker; then dropping his head upon his bosom, he said, meekly, —

"If it be your excellency's pleasure."

"It is necessary. Since I have filled the station which I now hold, it has become my duty to know many men, who, like yourself, have been my instruments in procuring intelligence. You have I trusted more than all; I early saw in you a regard to truth and principle, that, I am pleased to say, has never deceived me — you alone know my secret agents in the city, and on your fidelity depend, not only their fortunes, but their lives."

He paused, as if to reflect, in order that full justice might be done to the pedler, and then continued: —

"I believe you are one of the very few that I have employed who have acted faithfully to our cause; and, while you have passed as a spy of the enemy, have never given intelligence that you were not permitted to divulge To me, and to me only of all the world, you seem to have acted with a strong attachment to the liberties of America."

During this address, Harvey gradually raised his head from his bosom, until it reached the highest point of elevation; a faint tinge gathered in his cheeks, and, as the officer concluded, it was diffused over his whole countenance in a deep glow, while he stood proudly swelling with his emotions, but with eyes that modestly sought the feet of the speaker.

"It is now my duty to pay you for these services; hitherto you have postponed receiving your reward, and the debt has become a heavy one — I wish not to undervalue your dangers; here are a hundred doubloons; you will remember the poverty of our country, and attribute to it the smallness of your pay."

The pedler raised his eyes to the countenance of the speaker; but, as the other held forth the money, he moved back, as if refusing the bag.

"It is not much for your services and risks, I acknowledge," continued the general, "but it is all that I have to offer; at the end of the campaign, it may be in my power to increase it."

"Does your excellency think that I have exposed my life, and blasted my character, for money?"

"If not for money, what then?"

"What has brought your excellency into the field? For what do you daily and hourly expose your precious life to battle and the halter? What is there about me to mourn, when such men as you risk their all for our country? No, no, no — not a dollar of your gold will I touch; poor America has need of it all!"

The bag dropped from the hand of the officer, and fell at the feet of the pedler, where it lay neglected during the remainder of the interview. The officer looked steadily at the face of his companion, and continued, —

"There are many motives which might govern me, that to you are unknown. Our situations are different; I am known as the leader of armies — but you must descend into the grave with the reputation of a foe to your native land. Remember that the veil which conceals your true character cannot be raised in years — perhaps never."

Birch again lowered his face, but there was no yielding of the soul in the movement.

"You will soon be old; the prime of your days is already past; what have you to subsist on?"

"These!" said the pedler, stretching forth his hands, that were already embrowned with toil.

"But those may fail you; take enough to secure a support to your age. Remember your risks and cares. I have told you that the characters of men who are much esteemed in life depend on your secrecy; what pledge can I give them of your fidelity?"

"Tell them," said Birch, advancing and unconsciously resting one foot on the bag, "tell them that I would not take the gold!"

The composed features of the officer relaxed into a smile of benevolence, and he grasped the hand of the pedler firmly.

"Now, indeed, I know you; and although the same reasons which have hitherto compelled me to expose your valuable life will still exist, and prevent my openly asserting your character, in private I can always be your friend; fail not to apply to me when in want or suffering, and so long as God giveth to me, so long will I freely share with a man who feels so nobly and acts so well. If sickness or want should ever assail you, and peace once more smile upon our efforts, seek the gate of him whom you have so often met as Harper, and he will not blush to acknowledge you in his true character."

"It is little that I need in this life," said Harvey; "so long as God gives me health and honest industry, I can never want in this country; but to know that your excellency is my friend, is a blessing that I prize more than all the gold of England's treasury."

The officer stood for a few moments in the attitude of intense thought. He then drew to him the desk, and wrote a few lines on a piece of paper, and gave it to the pedler.

"That Providence destines this country to some great and glorious fate I must believe, while I witness the patriotism that pervades the bosoms of her lowest citizens," he

said. "It must be dreadful to a mind like yours to descend into the grave, branded as a foe to liberty; but you already know the lives that would be sacrificed, should your real character be revealed. It is impossible to do you justice now, but I fearlessly entrust you with this certificate; should we never meet again, it may be serviceable to your children."

"Children!" exclaimed the pedler, "can I give to a family the infamy of my name!"

The officer gazed at the strong emotion he exhibited with pain, and he made a slight movement towards the gold; but it was arrested by the expression of his companion's face. Harvey saw the intention, and shook his head, as he continued more mildly, —

"It is, indeed, a treasure that your excellency gives me: it is safe, too. There are men living who could say that my life was nothing to me, compared to your secrets. The paper that I told you was lost I swallowed when taken last by the Virginians. It was the only time I ever deceived your excellency, and it shall be the last; yes, this is, indeed, a treasure to me; perhaps," he continued, with a melancholy smile, "it may be known after my death who was my friend; but if it should not, there are none to grieve for me."

"Remember," said the officer, with strong emotion, "that in me you will always have a secret friend; but openly I cannot know you."

"I know it, I know it," said Birch; "I knew it when I took the service. 'Tis probably the last time that I shall ever see your excellency. May God pour down his choicest blessings on your head!" He paused, and moved towards the door. The officer followed him with eyes that expressed deep interest. Once more the pedler turned, and seemed to gaze on the placid, but commanding features of the general with regret and reverence, and then, bowing low, he withdrew.

The armies of America and France were led by their illustrious commander against the enemy under Cornwallis, and terminated a campaign in triumph that had commenced

in difficulties. Great Britain soon after became disgusted with the war; and the independence of the States was acknowledged.

As years rolled by, it became a subject of pride among the different actors in the war, and their descendants, to boast of their efforts in the cause which had confessedly heaped so many blessings upon their country; but the name of Harvey Birch died away among the multitude of agents, who were thought to have labored in secret against the rights of their countrymen. His image, however, was often present to the mind of the powerful chief, who alone knew his true character; and several times did he cause secret inquiries to be made into the other's fate, one of which only resulted in any success. By this he learned that a pedler of a different name, but similar appearance, was toiling through the new settlements that were springing up in every direction, and that he was struggling with the advance of years and apparent poverty. Death prevented further inquiries on the part of the officer, and a long period passed before he was again heard of.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood —
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest;
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

GRAY.

It was thirty-three years after the interview which we have just related that an American army was once more arrayed against the troops of England; but the scene was transferred from the banks of the Hudson to those of the Niagara.

The body of Washington had long lain mouldering in the tomb; but as time was fast obliterating the slight impressions of political enmity or personal envy, his name was hourly receiving new lustre, and his worth and integrity each moment became more visible, not only to his countrymen, but to the world. He was already the acknowledged hero of an age of reason and truth; and many a young heart, amongst those who formed the pride of our army in 1814, was glowing with the recollection of the one great name of America, and inwardly beating with the sanguine expectation of emulating, in some degree, its renown. In no one were these virtuous hopes more vivid than in the bosom of a young officer who stood on the table-rock, contemplating the great cataract, on the evening of the 25th of July of that bloody year. The person of this youth was tall and finely moulded, indicating a just proportion between strength and activity; his deep black eyes were of a searching and dazzling brightness. At times, as they gazed upon the flood of waters that rushed tumultuously at his feet, there was a stern and daring look that flashed from them, which denoted the ardor of an en-

thusiast. But this proud expression was softened by the lines of a mouth around which there played a suppressed archness, that partook of feminine beauty. His hair shone in the setting sun like ringlets of gold, as the air from the falls gently moved the rich curls from a forehead whose whiteness showed that exposure and heat alone had given their darker hue to a face glowing with health. There was another officer standing by the side of this favored youth; and both seemed, by the interest they betrayed, to be gazing, for the first time, at the wonder of the western world. A profound silence was observed by each, until the companion of the officer that we have described suddenly started, and pointing eagerly with his sword into the abyss beneath, exclaimed, —

"See! Wharton, there is a man crossing in the very eddies of the cataract, and in a skiff no bigger than an egg-shell."

"He has a knapsack — it is probably a soldier," returned the other. "Let us meet him at the ladder, Mason, and learn his tidings."

Some time was expended in reaching the spot where the adventurer was intercepted. Contrary to the expectations of the young soldiers, he proved to be a man far advanced in life, and evidently no follower of the camp. His years might be seventy, and they were indicated more by the thin hairs of silver that lay scattered over his wrinkled brow, than by any apparent failure of his system. His frame was meagre and bent; but it was the attitude of habit, for his sinews were strung with the toil of half a century. His dress was mean, and manifested the economy of its owner, by the number and nature of its repairs. On his back was a scantily furnished pack, that had led to the mistake in his profession. A few words of salutation, and, on the part of the young men, of surprise, that one so aged should venture so near the whirlpools of the cataract, were exchanged; when the old man inquired, with a voice that began to manifest the tremor of age, the news from the contending armies.

"We whipped the red-coats here the other day, among

the grass on the Chippewa plains," said the one who was called Mason; "since when, we have been playing hide-and-go-seek with the ships; but we are now marching back from where we started, shaking our heads, and as surly as the devil."

"Perhaps you have a son among the soldiers," said his companion, with a milder demeanor, and an air of kindness; "if so, tell me his name and regiment, and I will take you to him."

The old man shook his head, and, passing his hand over his silver locks, with an air of meek resignation, he answered, —

"No; I am alone in the world!"

"You should have added, Captain Dunwoodie," cried his careless comrade, "if you could find either; for nearly half our army has marched down the road, and may be, by this time, under the walls of Fort George, for anything that we know to the contrary."

The old man stopped suddenly, and looked earnestly from one of his companions to the other; the action being observed by the soldiers, they paused also.

"Did I hear right?" the stranger uttered, raising his hand to screen his eyes from the rays of the setting sun; "what did he call you?"

"My name is Wharton Dunwoodie," replied the youth, smiling.

The stranger motioned silently for him to remove his hat, which the youth did accordingly, and his fair hair blew aside like curls of silk, and opened the whole of his ingenuous countenance to the inspection of the other.

"'Tis like our native land!" exclaimed the old man with vehemence, "improving with time; God has blessed both."

"Why do you stare thus, Lieutenant Mason?" cried Captain Dunwoodie, laughing a little; "you show more astonishment than when you saw the falls."

"Oh, the falls! — they are a thing to be looked at on a moonshiny night, by your aunt Sarah and that gay old bachelor, Colonel Singleton; but a fellow like myself

never shows surprise, unless it may be at such a touch as this."

The extraordinary vehemence of the stranger's manner had passed away as suddenly as it was exhibited, but he listened to this speech with deep interest, while Dunwoodie replied, a little gravely, —

"Come, come, Tom, no jokes about my good aunt, I beg; she is kindness itself, and I have heard it whispered that her youth was not altogether happy."

"Why, as to rumor," said Mason, "there goes one in Accomac, that Colonel Singleton offers himself to her regularly every Valentine's day; and there are some who add that your old great-aunt helps his suit."

"Aunt Jeanette!" said Dunwoodie, laughing; "dear good soul, she thinks but little of marriage in any shape, I believe, since the death of Dr. Sitgreaves. There were some whispers of a courtship between them formerly, but it ended in nothing but civilities, and I suspect that the whole story arises from the intimacy of Colonel Singleton and my father. You know they were comrades in the horse, as indeed was your own father."

"I know all that, of course; but you must not tell me that the particular, prim bachelor goes so often to General Dunwoodie's plantation merely for the sake of talking old soldier with your father. The last time I was there, that yellow, sharp-nosed housekeeper of your mother's took me into the pantry, and said that the colonel was no despisable match, as she called it, and how the sale of his plantation in Georgia had brought him — oh, Lord! I don't know how much."

"Quite likely," returned the captain; "Katy Haynes is no bad calculator."

They had stopped during this conversation, in uncertainty whether their new companion was to be left or not.

The old man listened to each word as it was uttered, with the most intense interest; but, towards the conclusion of the dialogue, the earnest attention of his countenance changed to a kind of inward smile. He shook his head, and, passing his hands over his forehead, seemed to be think-

ing of other times. Mason paid but little attention to the expression of his features, and continued —

"To me, she is selfishness embodied!"

"Her selfisness does but little harm," returned Dunwoodie. "One of her greatest difficulties is her aversion to the blacks. She says that she never saw but one that she liked."

"And who was he?"

"His name was Cæsar; he was a house-servant of my late grandfather Wharton. You don't remember him, I believe; he died the same year with his master, while we were children. Katy yearly sings his requiem, and, upon my word, I believe he deserved it. I have heard something of his helping my English uncle, as we call General Wharton, in some difficulty that occurred in the old war. My mother always speaks of him with great affection. Both Cæsar and Katy came to Virginia with my mother when she married. My mother was" —

"An angel!" interrupted the old man, in a voice that startled the young soldiers by its abruptness and energy.

"Did you know her?" cried the son, with a glow of pleasure on his cheek.

The reply of the stranger was interrupted by sudden and heavy explosions of artillery, which were immediately followed by continued volleys of small-arms, and in a few minutes the air was filled with the tumult of a warm and well-contested battle.

The two soldiers hastened with precipitation towards the camp, accompanied by their new acquaintance. The excitement and anxiety created by the approaching fight prevented a continuance of the conversation, and the three held their way to the army, making occasional conjectures on the cause of the fire, and the probability of a general engagement. During their short and hurried walk, Captain Dunwoodie, however, threw several friendly glances at the old man, who moved over the ground with astonishing energy for his years, for the heart of the youth was warmed by an eulogium on a mother that he adored. In a short time they joined the regiment to which the officers be

longed, when the captain, squeezing the stranger's hand, earnestly begged that he would make inquiries after him on the following morning, and that he might see him in his own tent. Here they separated.

Everything in the American camp announced an approaching struggle. At a distance of a few miles, the sound of cannon and musketry was heard above the roar of the cataract. The troops were soon in motion, and a movement made to support the division of the army which was already engaged. Night had set in before the reserve and irregulars reached the foot of Lundy's Lane, a road that diverged from the river and crossed a conical eminence, at no great distance from the Niagara highway. The summit of this hill was crowned with the cannon of the British, and in the flat beneath was the remnant of Scott's gallant brigade, which for a long time had held an unequal contest with distinguished bravery. A new line was interposed, and one column of the Americans directed to charge up the hill, parallel to the road. This column took the English in flank, and, bayoneting their artillerists, gained possession of the cannon. They were immediately joined by their comrades, and the enemy was swept from the hill. But large reinforcements were joining the English general momentarily, and their troops were too brave to rest easy under the defeat. Repeated and bloody charges were made to recover the guns, but in all they were repulsed with slaughter. During the last of these struggles, the ardor of the youthful captain whom we have mentioned urged him to lead his men some distance in advance, to scatter a daring party of the enemy. He succeeded, but in returning to the line missed his lieutenant from the station that he ought to have occupied. Soon after this repulse, which was the last, orders were given to the shattered troops to return to the camp. The British were nowhere to be seen, and preparations were made to take in such of the wounded as could be moved. At this moment Wharton Dunwoodie, impelled by affection for his friend, seized a lighted fusee, and taking two of his men went himself in quest of his body, where he was supposed to have fallen. Mason was

found on the side of the hill, seated with great composure, but unable to walk from a fractured leg. Dunwoodie saw and flew to the side of his comrade, exclaiming, —

"Ah! dear Tom, I knew I should find you the nearest man to the enemy."

"Softly, softly; handle me tenderly," replied the lieutenant; "no, there is a brave fellow still nearer than myself, and who he can be I know not. He rushed out of our smoke, near my platoon, to make a prisoner or some such thing, but, poor fellow, he never came back; there he lies just over the hillock. I have spoken to him several times, but I fancy he is past answering."

Dunwoodie went to the spot, and to his astonishment beheld the aged stranger.

"It is the old man who knew my mother!" cried the youth; "for her sake he shall have honorable burial; lift him, and let him be carried in; his bones shall rest on native soil."

The men approached to obey. He was lying on his back, with his face exposed to the glaring light of the fusee; his eyes were closed, as if in slumber; his lips, sunken with years, were slightly moved from their natural position, but it seemed more like a smile than a convulsion which had caused the change. A soldier's musket lay near him; his hands were pressed upon his breast, and one of them contained a substance that glittered like silver. Dunwoodie stooped, and removing the limbs, perceived the place where the bullet had found a passage to his heart. The subject of his last care was a tin box, through which the fatal lead had gone; and the dying moments of the old man must have passed in drawing it from his bosom. Dunwoodie opened it, and found a paper in which, to his astonishment, he read the following: —

"Circumstances of political importance, which involve the lives and fortunes of many, have hitherto kept secret what this paper now reveals. Harvey Birch has for years

been a faithful and unrequited servant of his country. Though man does not, may God reward him for his conduct!

GEO. WASHINGTON."

It was the SPY OF THE NEUTRAL GROUND, who died as he had lived, devoted to his country, and a martyr to her liberties.

THE END.

"Maud bade him go on, waiting herself behind a tree, to let the two men precede her a short distance. This was done, and the major stole up to her side unseen." — *Wyandotte*, p. 200.

WYANDOTTE

OR

THE HUTTED KNOLL

A TALE

BY

J. FENIMORE COOPER

I venerate the pilgrim's cause,
Yet for the red-man dare to plead:
We bow to Heaven's recorded laws,
He turns to Nature for his creed.

SPRAGUE.

BOSTON
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1881

PREFACE.

THE history of the borders is filled with legends of the sufferings of isolated families, during the troubled scenes of colonial warfare. Those which we now offer to the reader are distinctive in many of their leading facts, if not rigidly true in the details. The first alone is necessary to the legitimate objects of fiction.

One of the misfortunes of a nation is to hear little besides its own praises. Although the American Revolution was probably as just an effort as was ever made by a people to resist the first inroads of oppression, the cause had its evil aspects, as well as all other human struggles. We have been so much accustomed to hear everything extolled, of late years, that could be dragged into the remotest connection with that great event, and the principles which led to it, that there is danger of overlooking truth, in a pseudo-patriotism. Nothing is really patriotic, however, that is not strictly true and just; any more than it is paternal love to undermine the constitution of a child by an indiscriminate indulgence in pernicious diet. That there were demagogues in 1776, is as certain as that there are demagogues now, and will probably continue to be demagogues as long as means for misleading the common mind shall exist.

A great deal of undigested morality is uttered to the world under the disguise of a pretended public virtue. In the eye of reason, the man who deliberately and voluntarily contracts civil engagements is more strictly bound to their fulfillment, than he whose whole obligations consist of an accident over which he had not the smallest control, that of

birth; though the very reverse of this is usually maintained under the influence of popular prejudice. The reader will probably discover how we view this matter, in the course of our narrative.

Perhaps this story is obnoxious to the charge of a slight anachronism, in representing the activity of the Indians a year earlier than any were actually employed in the struggle in 1775. During the century of warfare that existed between the English and French colonies, the savage tribes were important agents in furthering the views of the respective belligerents. The war was on the frontiers, and these fierce savages were, in a measure, necessary to the management of hostilities that invaded their own villages and hunting-grounds. In 1775, the enemy came from the side of the Atlantic, and it was only after the struggle had acquired force, that the operations of the interior rendered the services of such allies desirable. In other respects, without pretending to refer to any real events, the incidents of this tale are believed to be sufficiently historical for all legitimate purposes of fiction.

In this book the writer has aimed at sketching several distinct varieties of the human race, as true to the governing impulses of their educations, habits, modes of thinking, and natures. The red-man had his morality, as much as his white brother, and it is well known that even Christian ethics are colored and governed by standards of opinion set up on purely human authority. The honesty of one Christian is not always that of another, any more than his humanity, truth, fidelity, or faith. The spirit must quit its earthly tabernacle altogether, ere it cease to be influenced by its tints and imperfections.

WYANDOTTÉ.

CHAPTER I.

An acorn fell from an old oak tree,
And lay on the frosty ground;
"Oh, what shall the fate of the acorn be?"
Was whispered all around
By low-toned voices chiming sweet,
Like a floweret's bell when swung —
And grasshopper steeds were gathering fleet,
And the beetle's hoofs up-rung.

MRS. SEBA SMITH.

THERE is a wide-spread error on the subject of American scenery. From the size of the lakes, the length and breadth of the rivers, the vast solitudes of the forests, and the seemingly boundless expanse of the prairies, the world has come to attach to it an idea of grandeur; a word that is in nearly every case misapplied. The scenery of that portion of the American continent which has fallen to the share of the Anglo-Saxon race very seldom rises to a scale that merits this term; when it does, it is more owing to the accessories, as in the case of the interminable woods, than to the natural face of the country. To him who is accustomed to the terrific sublimity of the Alps, the softened and yet wild grandeur of the Italian lakes, or to the noble witchery of the shores of the Mediterranean, this country is apt to seem tame and uninteresting as a whole; though it certainly has exceptions that carry charms of this nature to the verge of loveliness.

Of the latter character is the face of most of that region which lies in the angle formed by the junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson, extending as far south, or even farther than the line of Pennsylvania, and west to the

verge of that vast rolling plain which composes western New York. This is a region of more than ten thousand square miles of surface, embracing to-day ten counties at least, and supporting a rural population of near half a million of souls, excluding the river towns.

All who have seen this district of country, and who are familiar with the elements of charming rather than grand scenery it possesses, are agreed in extolling its capabilities, and, in some instances, its realities. The want of high finish is common to everything of this sort in America; and perhaps we may add that the absence of picturesqueness, as connected with the works of man, is a general defect; still, this particular region, and all others resembling it — for they abound on the wide surface of the twenty-six States — has beauties of its own that it would be difficult to meet with in any of the older portions of the earth.

They who have done us the honor to read our previous works, will at once understand that the district to which we allude is that of which we have taken more than one occasion to write; and we return to it now less with a desire to celebrate its charms than to exhibit them in a somewhat novel, and yet perfectly historical aspect. Our own earlier labors will have told the reader that all of this extended district of country, with the exception of belts of settlements along the two great rivers named, was a wilderness anterior to the American Revolution. There was a minor class of exceptions to this general rule, however, to which it will be proper to advert, lest, by conceiving us too literally, the reader may think he can convict us of a contradiction. In order to be fully understood, the explanations shall be given at a little length.

While it is true, then, that the mountainous region which now contains the counties of Schoharie, Otsego, Chenango, Broome, Delaware, etc., was a wilderness in 1775, the colonial governors had begun to make grants of its lands some twenty years earlier. The patent of the estate on which we are writing lies before us; and it bears the date of 1769, with an Indian grant annexed that is a year or two older. This may be taken as a mean date

for the portion of country alluded to; some of the deeds being older, and others still more recent. These grants of land were originally made subject to quit-rents to the crown; and usually on the payment of heavy fees to the colonial officers, after going through the somewhat supererogatory duty of "extinguishing the Indian title," as it was called. The latter were pretty effectually "extinguished" in that day, as well as in our own; and it would be a matter of curious research to ascertain the precise nature of the purchase-money given to the aborigines. In the case of the patent before us, the Indian right was "extinguished" by means of a few rifles, blankets, kettles, and beads; though the grant covers a nominal hundred thousand, and a real hundred and ten or twenty thousand acres of land.

The abuse of the grants, as land became more valuable, induced a law, restricting the number of acres patented to any one person, at any one time, to a thousand. Our monarchical predecessors had the same facilities, and it may be added, the same propensities, to rendering a law a dead letter, as belongs to our republican selves. The patent on our table, being for a nominal hundred thousand acres, contains the names of one hundred different grantees, while three several parchment documents at its side, each signed by thirty-three of these very persons, vest the legal estate in the first named, for whose sole benefit the whole concession was made; the dates of the last instruments succeeding, by one or two days, that of the royal patent itself.

Such is the history of most of the original titles to the many estates that dotted the region we have described, prior to the Revolution. Money and favoritism, however, were not always the motives of these large concessions. Occasionally, services presented their claims; and many instances occur in which old officers of the army, in particular, received a species of reward, by a patent for land, the fees being duly paid, and the Indian title righteously "extinguished." These grants to ancient soldiers were seldom large, except in the cases of officers of rank; three or four thousand well selected acres being a sufficien

boon to the younger sons of Scottish lairds or English squires, who had been accustomed to look upon a single farm as an estate.

As most of the soldiers mentioned were used to forest life, from having been long stationed at frontier posts, and had thus become familiarized with its privations and hardened against its dangers, it was no unusual thing for them to sell out, or go on half-pay, when the wants of a family began to urge their claims, and to retire to their "patents," as the land itself, as well as the instrument by which it was granted, invariably was termed, with a view of establishing themselves permanently as landlords.

These grants from the crown, in the portions of the colony of New York that lie west of the river counties, were generally, if not invariably, simple concessions of the fee, subject to quit-rents to the king, and reservations of mines of the precious metals, without any of the privileges of feudal seignory, as existed in the older manors on the Hudson, on the islands, and on the Sound. Why this distinction was made, it exceeds our power to say; but that the fact was so, as a rule, we have it in proof, by means of a great number of the original patents themselves, that have been transmitted to us from various sources. Still, the habits of "home" entailed the name, even where the thing was not to be found. Titular manors exist, in a few instances, to this day, where no manorial rights were ever granted; and manor-houses were common appellations for the residences of the landlords of large estates, that were held in fee, without any exclusive privileges, and subject to the reservation named. Some of these manorial residences were of so primitive an appearance, as to induce the belief that the names were bestowed in pleasantry; the dwellings themselves being of logs, with the bark still on them, and the other fixtures to correspond. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks, early impressions and rooted habits could easily transfer terms to such an abode; and there was always a saddened enjoyment among these exiles, when they could liken their forest names and usages to those they had left in the distant scenes of their childhood.

The effect of the different causes we have here given wai to dot the region described, though at long intervals, with spots of a semi-civilized appearance, in the midst of the vast — nay, almost boundless — expanse of forest. Some of these early settlements had made considerable advances towards finish and comfort, ere the war of '76 drove their occupants to seek protection against the inroads of the savages; and long after the influx of immigration which succeeded the peace, the fruits, the meadows, and the tilled fields of these oases in the desert, rendered them conspicuous amidst the blackened stumps, piled logs, and smooty fallows of an active and bustling settlement. At even a much later day they were to be distinguished by the smoother surfaces of their fields, the greater growth and more bountiful yield of their orchards, and by the general appearance of a more finished civilization, and of greater age. Here and there, a hamlet had sprung up; and isolated places, like Cherry Valley and Wyoming, were found, that have since become known to the general history of the country.

Our present tale now leads us to the description of one of those early personal or family settlements, that had grown up, in what was then a very remote part of the territory in question, under the care and supervision of an ancient officer of the name of Willoughby. Captain Willoughby, after serving many years, had married an American wife, and continuing his services until a son and daughter were born, he sold his commission, procured a grant of land, and determined to retire to his new possessions, in order to pass the close of his life in the tranquil pursuits of agriculture, and in the bosom of his family. An adopted child was also added to his cares. Being an educated as well as a provident man, Captain Willoughby had set about the execution of this scheme with deliberation, prudence, and intelligence. On the frontiers, or lines, as it is the custom to term the American boundaries, he had become acquainted with a Tuscarora, known by the English *sobriquet* of "Saucy Nick." This fellow, a sort of half-outcast from his own people, had early attached himself to the whites, had acquired their language, and, owing to a singular mixture of good and bad qualities, blended

with great native shrewdness, he had wormed himself into the confidence of several commanders of small garrisons, among whom was our captain. No sooner was the mind of the latter made up concerning his future course, than he sent for Nick, who was then in the fort; when the following conversation took place: —

"Nick," commenced the captain, passing his hand over his brow, as was his wont when in a reflecting mood, "Nick, I have an important movement in view, in which you can be of some service to me."

The Tuscarora, fastening his dark, basilisk-like eyes on the soldier, gazed a moment, as if to read his soul; then he jerked a thumb backwards over his own shoulder, and said, with a grave smile, —

"Nick understand. Want six, two, scalp off Frenchman's head; wife and child; out yonder, over dere, up in Canada. Nick do him — what you give?"

"No, you red rascal, I want nothing of the sort — it is peace now (this conversation took place in 1764), and you know I never bought a scalp in time of war. Let me hear no more of this."

"What you want, den?" asked Nick, like one who was a good deal puzzled.

"I want land — good land — little, but good. I am about to get a grant — a patent" —

"Yes," interrupted Nick, nodding; "I know him — paper to take away Indian's hunting-ground."

"Why, I have no wish to do that; I am willing to pay the red-men reasonably for their right, first."

"Buy Nick's land, den; better dan any oder."

"Your land, knave? You own no land — belong to no tribe — have no rights to sell."

"What for ask Nick help, den?"

"What for? Why, because you know a good deal, though you own literally nothing. That's what for."

"Buy Nick know, den. Better dan he great fader know down at York."

"That is just what I do wish to purchase. I will pay you well, Nick, if you will start to-morrow, with your rifle

and a pocket-compass, off here towards the head-waters of the Susquehannah and Delaware, where the streams run rapidly, and where there are no fevers, and bring me an account of three or four thousand acres of rich bottom-land, in such a way as a surveyor can find it, and I can get a patent for it. What say, you Nick; will you go?"

"He not wanted. Nick sell 'e captain his own land; here in 'e fort."

"Knave, do you not know me well enough not to trifle when I am serious?"

"Nick ser'ous too; Mcravian priest no ser'ouser more dan Nick at dis moment. Got land to sell."

Captain Willoughby had found occasion to punish the Tuscarora in the course of his services; and as the parties understood each other perfectly well, the former saw the improbability of the latter's daring to trifle with him.

"Where is this land of yours, Nick?" he inquired, after studying the Indian's countenance for a moment. "Where does it lie, what is it like, how much is there of it, and how came you to own it?"

"Ask him just so ag'in," said Nick, taking up four twigs, to note down the questions *seriatim*.

The captain repeated his inquiries, the Tuscarora layng down a stick at each separate interrogatory.

"Where he be?" answered Nick, taking up a twig, as a memorandum. "He out dere — where he want him — where he say. One day's march from Susquehannah."

"Well; proceed."

"What he like? Like land, to be sure. T'ink he like water! Got some water — no too much — got some land — got no tree — got some tree. Got good sugar-bush — got place for wheat and corn."

"Proceed."

"How much of him?" continued Nick, taking up another twig; "much as he want; want little, got him — want more, got him. Want none at all, got none at all — got what he want."

"Go on."

"To be sure. How came to own him? How a pale-

face come to own America? Discover him — ha! Well, Nick discover land down yonder, up dere, over here."

"Nick, what the devil do you mean by all this?"

"No mean devil, at all — mean land — good land. Discover him — know where he is; catch beaver dere, three, two year. All Nick say, true as word of honor; much more too."

"Do you mean it is an old beaver-dam destroyed?" asked the captain, pricking up his ears; for he was too familiar with the woods not to understand the value of such a thing.

"No destroy — stand up yet — good as ever. Nick dere, last season."

"Why, then, do you tell of it? Are not the beaver of more value to you than any price you may receive for the land?"

"Cotch him all, four, two year ago — rest run away. No find beaver to stay long, when Indian once know, two time, where to set he trap. Beaver cunninger 'an pale-face — cunning as bear."

"I begin to comprehend you, Nick. How large do you suppose this pond to be?"

"He'm not as big as Lake Ontario. S'pose him smaller, what den? Big enough for farm."

"Does it cover one or two hundred acres, think you? Is it as large as the clearing around the fort?"

"Big as two, six, four of him. Take forty skin, dere, one season. Little lake; all 'e tree gone."

"And the land around it — is it mountainous and rough, or will it be good for corn?"

"All sugar-bush — what you want better? S'pose you want corn; plant him. S'pose you want sugar; make him."

Captain Willoughby was struck with this description, and he returned to the subject again and again. At length, after extracting all the information he could get from Nick, he struck a bargain with the fellow. A surveyor was engaged, and he started for the place under the guidance of the Tuscarora. The result showed that Nick

had not exaggerated. The pond was found, as he had described it to be, covering at least four hundred acres of low bottom-land; while near three thousand acres of higher river-flat, covered with beech and maple, spread around it for a considerable distance. The adjacent mountains, too, were arable, though bold, and promised, in time, to become a fertile and manageable district. Calculating his distances with judgment, the surveyor laid out his metes and bounds in such a manner as to include the pond, all the low-land, and about three thousand acres of hill, or mountain, making the materials for a very pretty little "patent" of somewhat more than six thousand acres of capital land. He then collected a few chiefs of the nearest tribe, dealt out his rum, tobacco, blankets, wampum, and gunpowder, got twelve Indians to make their marks on a bit of deer-skin, and returned to his employer with a map, a field-book, and a deed, by which the Indian title was "extinguished." The surveyor received his compensation, and set off on a similar excursion, for a different employer, and in another direction. Nick got his reward, too, and was well satisfied with the transaction. This he afterwards called "sellin' beaver when he all run away."

Furnished with the necessary means, Captain Willoughby now "sued out his patent," as it was termed, in due form. Having some influence the affair was soon arranged; the grant was made by the governor in council, a massive seal was annexed to a famous sheet of parchment, the signatures were obtained, and "Willoughby's Patent" took its place on the records of the colony, as well as on its maps. We are wrong as respects the latter particular; it did not take its place, on the maps of the colony, though it took a place; the location given, for many years afterwards, being some forty or fifty miles too far west. In this peculiarity there was nothing novel, the surveys of all new regions being liable to similar trifling mistakes. Thus it was, that an estate, lying within five-and-twenty miles of the city of New York, and in which we happen to have a small interest at this hour, was clipped

of its fair proportions, in consequence of losing some miles that ran over obtrusively into another colony; and, within a short distance of the spot where we are writing, a "patent" has been squeezed entirely out of existence, between the claims of two older grants.

No such calamity befell "Willoughby's Patent," however. The land was found, with all its "marked or blazed trees," its "heaps of stones," "large butternut corners," and "dead oaks." In a word, everything was as it should be; even to the quality of the soil, the beaver-pond, and the quantity. As respects the last, the colony never gave "struck measure;" a thousand acres on paper seldom falling short of eleven or twelve hundred in soil. In the present instance, the six thousand two hundred and forty-six acres of "Willoughby's Patent," were subsequently ascertained to contain just seven thousand and ninety-two acres of solid ground.

Our limits and plan will not permit us to give more than a sketch of the proceedings of the captain, in taking possession; though we feel certain that a minute account of the progress of such a settlement would possess a sort of Robinson Crusoe-like interest, that might repay the reader. As usual, the adventurers commenced their operations in the spring. Mrs. Willoughby and the children were left with their friends in Albany; while the captain and his party pioneered their way to the patent in the best manner they could. This party consisted of Nick, who went in the capacity of hunter, an office of a good deal of dignity, and of the last importance to a set of adventurers on an expedition of this nature. Then there were eight axe-men, a house-carpenter, a mason, and a millwright. These, with Captain Willoughby, and an invalid sergeant of the name of Joyce, composed the party.

Our adventurers made most of their journey by water. After finding their way to the head of the Canaideraga, mistaking it for the Otsego, they felled trees, hollowed them into canoes, embarked, and, aided by a yoke of oxen that were driven along the shore, they wormed their way through the oaks into the Susquehannah, descending that river until they reached the Unadilla, which stream they

ascended until they came to the small river, known in the parlance of the country by the erroneous name of a creek, that ran through the captain's new estate. The labor of this ascent was exceedingly severe; but the whole journey was completed by the end of April, and while the streams were high. Snow still lay in the woods; but the sap had started, and the season was beginning to show its promise.

The first measure adopted by our adventurers was to "hut." In the very centre of the pond, which, it will be remembered, covered four hundred acres, was an island of some five or six acres in extent. It was a rocky knoll, that rose forty feet above the surface of the water, and was still crowned with noble pines, a species of tree that had escaped the ravages of the beaver. In the pond itself a few "stubs" alone remained, the water having killed the trees, which had fallen and decayed. This circumstance showed that the stream had long before been dammed; successions of families of beavers having probably occupied the place, and renewed the works, for centuries, at intervals of generations. The dam in existence, however, was not very old; the animals having fled from their great enemy, man, rather than from any other foe.

To the island Captain Willoughby transferred all his stores, and here he built his hut. This was opposed to the notions of his axe-men, who, rightly enough, fancied the mainland would be more convenient; but the captain and the sergeant, after a council of war, decided that the position on the knoll would be the most military, and might be defended the longest against man or beast. Another station was taken up, however, on the nearest shore, where such of the men were permitted to "hut" as preferred the location.

These preliminaries observed, the captain meditated a bold stroke against the wilderness, by draining the pond, and coming at once into the possession of a noble farm, cleared of trees and stumps, as it might be by a *coup de main*. This would be compressing the results of ordinary years of toil into those of a single season, and everybody was agreed as to the expediency of the course, provided it were feasible.

The feasibility was soon ascertained. The stream, which ran through the valley, was far from swift until it reached a pass where the hills approached each other in low promontories; there the land fell rapidly away to what might be termed a lower terrace. Across this gorge, or defile, a distance of about five hundred feet, the dam had been thrown, a good deal aided by the position of some rocks that here rose to the surface, and through which the little river found its passage. The part which might be termed the keystone of the dam, was only twenty yards wide, and immediately below it the rocks fell away rapidly, quite sixty feet, carrying down the waste water in a sort of fall. Here the millwright announced his determination to commence operations at once, putting in a protest against destroying the works of the beavers. A pond of four hundred acres being too great a luxury for the region, the man was overruled, and the labor commenced.

The first blow was struck against the dam about nine o'clock on the 2d day of May, 1765, and, by evening, the little sylvan-looking lake, which had lain embedded in the forest, glittering in the morning sun, unruffled by a breath of air, had entirely disappeared! In its place, there remained an open expanse of wet mud, thickly covered with pools and the remains of beaver-houses, with a small river winding its way slowly through the slime. The change to the eye was melancholy indeed; though the prospect was cheering to the agriculturist. No sooner did the water obtain a little passage, than it began to clear the way for itself, gushing out in a torrent through the pass already mentioned.

The following morning, Captain Willoughby almost mourned over the work of his hands. The scene was so very different from that it had presented when the flats were covered with water, that it was impossible not to feel the change. For quite a month it had an influence on the whole party. Nick, in particular, denounced it, as unwise and uncalled for, though he had made his price out of the very circumstance in prospective; and even Sergeant Joyce was compelled to admit that the knoll, an island no longer,

had lost quite half its security as a military position. The next month, however, brought other changes. Half the pools had vanished by drainings and evaporation; the mud had begun to crack, and in some places to pulverize; while the upper margin of the old pond had become sufficiently firm to permit the oxen to walk over it without miring. Fences of trees, brush, and even rails inclosed, on this portion of the flats, quite fifty acres of land; and Indian corn, oats, pumpkins, peas, potatoes, flax, and several other sorts of seed, were already in the ground. The spring proved dry, and the sun of the forty-third degree of latitude was doing its work with great power and beneficence. What was of nearly equal importance, the age of the pond had prevented any recent accumulation of vegetable matter, and consequently spared those who labored around the spot, the impurities of atmosphere usually consequent on its decay. Grass-seed, too, had been liberally scattered on favorable places, and things began to assume the appearance of what is termed "living."

August presented a still different picture. A saw-mill was up, and had been at work for some time. Piles of green boards began to make their appearance, and the plane of the carpenter was already in motion. Captain Willoughby was rich, in a small way; in other words, he possessed a few thousand pounds besides his land, and had yet to receive the price of his commission. A portion of these means were employed judiciously to advance his establishment; and, satisfied that there would be no scarcity of fodder for the ensuing winter, a man had been sent into the settlements for another yoke of cattle and a couple of cows. Farming utensils were manufactured on the spot, and sleds began to take the place of carts; the latter exceeding the skill of any of the workmen present.

October offered its products as a reward for all this toil. The yield was enormous, and of excellent quality. Of Indian corn, the captain gathered several hundred bushels, besides stacks of stalks and tops. His turnips, too, were superabundant in quantity, and of a delicacy and flavor entirely unknown to the precincts of old lands. The potatoes

had not done so well; to own the truth, they were a little watery, though there were enough of them to winter every hoof he had, of themselves. Then the peas and garden truck were both good and plenty; and a few pigs having been procured, there was the certainty of enjoying plenty of that important article, pork, during the coming winter.

Late in the autumn, the captain rejoined his family in Albany, quitting the field for winter quarters. He left Sergeant Joyce in garrison, supported by Nick, a miller, the mason, carpenter, and three of the axe-men. Their duty was to prepare materials for the approaching season, to take care of the stock, to put in winter crops, to make a few bridges, clear out a road or two, haul wood to keep themselves from freezing, build a log barn and some sheds, and otherwise to advance the interests of the settlement. They were also to commence a house for the patentee.

As his children were at school, Captain Willoughby determined not to take his family immediately to the Hutted Knoll, as the place soon came to be called, from the circumstances of the original bivouac. This name was conferred by Sergeant Joyce, who had a taste in that way, and as it got to be confirmed by the condescension of the proprietor and his family, we have chosen it to designate our present labors. From time to time, a messenger arrived with news from the place; and twice, in the course of the winter, the same individual went back with supplies, and encouraging messages to the different persons left in the clearing. As spring approached, however, the captain began to make his preparations for the coming campaign, in which he was to be accompanied by his wife; Mrs. Willoughby, a mild, affectionate, true-hearted New York woman, having decided not to let her husband pass another summer in that solitude without feeling the cheering influence of her presence.

In March, before the snow began to melt, several sleigh loads of different necessaries were sent up the valley of the Mohawk, to a point opposite the head of the Otsego, where a thriving village called Fort Plain now stands. Thence men were employed in transporting the articles, partly by means of "jumpers" improvised for the occasion, and partly on

pack-horses, to the lake, which was found this time, instead of its neighbor the Canaderaiga. This necessary and laborious service occupied six weeks, the captain having been up as far as the lake once himself; returning to Albany, however, ere the snow was gone.

CHAPTER II.

All things are new — the buds, the leaves,
That gild the elm-tree's nodding crest,
And even the nest beneath the eaves —
There are no birds in last year's nest.

LONGFELLOW.

"I HAVE good news for you, Wilhelmina," cried the captain, coming into the parlor where his wife used to sit and knit or sew quite half the day, and speaking with a bright face, and in a cheerful voice. "Here is a letter from my excellent old colonel; and Bob's affair is all settled and agreed on. He is to leave school next week, and to put on his Majesty's livery the week after."

Mrs. Willoughby smiled, and yet two or three tears followed each other down her cheeks, even while she smiled. The first was produced by pleasure at hearing that her son had got an ensigncy in the 60th, or Royal Americans; and the last was a tribute paid to nature; a mother's fears at consigning an only boy to the profession of arms.

"I am rejoiced, Willoughby," she said, "because you rejoice, and I know that Robert will be delighted at possessing the king's commission; but he is very young to be sent into the dangers of battle and the camp!"

"I was younger when I actually went into battle, for then it was war; now, we have a peace that promises to be endless, and Bob will have abundance of time to cultivate a beard before he smells gunpowder. As for myself" — he added in a half-regretful manner, for old habits and opinions would occasionally cross his mind — "as for myself, the cultivation of turnips must be my future occupation. Well, the bit of parchment is sold, Bob has got his in its place, while the difference in price is in my pocket, and no more need be said — and here come our dear girls, Wilhelmina,

to prevent any regrets. The father of two such daughters ought at least to be happy."

At this instant, Beulah and Maud Willoughby (for so the adopted child was called as well as the real) entered the room, having taken the lodgings of their parents in a morning walk, on which they were regularly sent by the mistress of the boarding-school, in which they were receiving what was then thought to be a first-rate American female education. And much reason had their fond parents to be proud of them! Beulah, the eldest, was just eleven, while her sister was eighteen months younger. The first had a staid, and yet a cheerful look; but her cheeks were blooming, her eyes bright, and her smile sweet. Maud, the adopted one, however, had already the sunny countenance of an angel, with quite as much of the appearance of health as her sister; her face had more finesse, her looks more intelligence, her playfulness more feeling, her smile more tenderness, at times; at others, more meaning. It is scarcely necessary to say that both had that delicacy of outline which seems almost inseparable from the female form in this country. What was, perhaps, more usual in that day among persons of their class than it is in our own, each spoke her own language with an even, graceful utterance, and a faultless accuracy of pronunciation, equally removed from effort and provincialisms. As the Dutch was in very common use then at Albany, and most females of Dutch origin had a slight touch of their mother tongue in their enunciation of English, this purity of dialect in the two girls was to be ascribed to the fact that their father was an Englishman by birth; their mother an American of purely English origin, though named after a Dutch godmother; and the head of the school in which they had now been three years, was a native of London, and a lady by habits and education.

"Now, Maud," cried the captain, after he had kissed the forehead, eyes, and cheeks of his smiling little favorite — "Now, Maud, I will set you to guess what good news I have for you and Beulah."

"You and mother don't mean to go to that bad Beaver

Manor this summer, as some call the ugly pond?" answered the child, quick as lightning.

"That is kind of you, my darling; more kind than prudent; but you are not right."

"Try Beulah, now," interrupted the mother, who, while she too doted on her youngest child, had an increasing respect for the greater solidity and better judgment of her sister; "let us hear Beulah's guess."

"It is something about my brother, I know by mother's eyes," answered the eldest girl, looking inquiringly into Mrs. Willoughby's face.

"Oh yes!" cried Maud, beginning to jump about the room, until she ended her saltations in her father's arms, "Bob has got his commission! I know it all well enough, now — I would not thank you to tell me — I know it all now — dear Bob, how he will laugh! and how happy I am!"

"Is it so, mother?" asked Beulah, anxiously, and without even a smile.

"Maud is right; Bob is an ensign, or will be one in a day or two. You do not seem pleased, my child?"

"I wish Robert were not a soldier, mother. Now he will be always away, and we shall never see him; then he may be obliged to fight, and who knows how unhappy it may make him?"

Beulah thought more of her brother than she did of herself; and, sooth to say, her mother had many of the child's misgivings. With Maud it was altogether different; she saw only the bright side of the picture; Bob gay and brilliant, his face covered with smiles, his appearance admired, himself, and of course his sisters, happy. Captain Willoughby sympathized altogether with his pet. Accustomed to arms, he rejoiced that a career in which he had partially failed — this he did not conceal from himself or his wife — that this same career had opened, as he trusted, with better auspices on his only son. He covered Maud with kisses, and then rushed from the house, finding his heart too full to run the risk of being unmanned in the presence of females.

A week later, availing themselves of one of the last falls of snow of the season, Captain Willoughby and his wife left Albany for the Knoll. The leave-taking was tender, and to the parents bitter; though, after all, it was known that little more than a hundred miles would separate them from their beloved daughters. Fifty of these miles, however, were absolutely wilderness; and to achieve them, quite a hundred of tangled forest, or of difficult navigation, were to be passed. The communications would be at considerable intervals, and difficult. Still they might be held, and the anxious mother left many injunctions with Mrs. Waring the head of the school, in relation to the health of her daughters, and the manner in which she was to be sent for, in the event of any serious illness.

Mrs. Willoughby had often overcome, as she fancied, the difficulties of a wilderness, in the company of her husband. It is the fashion highly to extol Napoleon's passage of the Alps, simply in reference to its physical obstacles. There never was a brigade moved twenty-four hours into the American wilds, that had not greater embarrassments of this nature to overcome, unless in those cases in which favorable river navigation has offered its facilities. Still, time and necessity had made a sort of military ways to all the more important frontier points occupied by the British garrisons, and the experience of Mrs. Willoughby had not hitherto been of the severe character of that she was now compelled to undergo.

The first fifty miles were passed over in a sleigh, in a few hours, and with little or no personal fatigue. This brought the travellers to a Dutch inn on the Mohawk, where the captain had often made his halts, and whither he had, from time to time, sent his advanced parties in the course of the winter and spring. Here a jumper was found prepared to receive Mrs. Willoughby; and the horse being led by the captain himself, a passage through the forest was effected as far as the head of the Otsego. The distance being about twelve miles, it required two days for its performance. As the settlements extended south from the Mohawk a few miles, the first night was passed in a log cabin on the ex-

treme verge of civilization, if civilization it could be called, and the remaining eight miles were got over in the course of the succeeding day. This was more than would probably have been achieved in the virgin forest, and under the circumstances, had not so many of the captain's people passed over the same ground, going and returning, thereby learning how to avoid the greatest difficulties of the route, and here and there constructing a rude bridge. They had also blazed the trees, shortening the road by pointing out its true direction.

At the head of the Otsego, our adventurers were fairly in the wilderness. Huts had been built to receive the travellers, and here the whole party assembled, in readiness to make a fresh start in company. It consisted of more than a dozen persons, in all; the black domestics of the family being present, as well as several mechanics whom Captain Willoughby had employed to carry on his improvements. The men sent in advance had not been idle, any more than those left at the Hutted Knoll. They had built three or four skiffs, one small bateau, and a couple of canoes. These were all in the water, in waiting for the disappearance of the ice, which was now reduced to a mass of stalactites, but clear and bright when separated and exposed to the sun. The south winds began to prevail, and the shore was glittering with the fast-melting piles of the frozen fluid, though it would have been vain yet to attempt a passage through it.

The Otsego is a sheet that we have taken more than one occasion to describe, and the picture it then presented, amidst its frame of mountains, will readily be imagined by most of our readers. In 1765, no sign of a settlement was visible on its shores, few of the grants of land in that vicinity extending back so far. Still the spot began to be known; and hunters had been in the habit of frequenting its bosom and its shores, for the last twenty years or more. Not a vestige of their presence, however, was to be seen from the huts of the captain; but Mrs. Willoughby assured her husband, as she stood leaning on his arm, the morning after her arrival, that never before had she gazed on so

eloquent, and yet so pleasing a picture of solitude as that which lay spread before her eyes.

"There is something encouraging and soothing in this bland south wind, too," she added, "which seems to promise that we shall meet with a beneficent nature in the spot to which we are going. The south airs of spring to me are always filled with promise."

"And justly, love; for they are the harbingers of a renewed vegetation. If the wind increase, as I think it may, we shall see this chilling sheet of ice succeeded by the more cheerful view of water. It is in this way that all these lakes open their bosoms in April."

Captain Willoughby did not know it while speaking, but at that moment quite two miles of the lower or southern end of the lake was clear, and the opening giving a sweep to the breeze, the latter was already driving the sheets of ice before it towards the head, at a rate of quite a mile in the hour. Just then, an Irishman, named Michael O'Hearn, who had recently arrived in America, and whom the captain had hired as a servant of all work, came rushing up to his master, and opened his teeming thoughts with an earnestness of manner, and a confusion of rhetoric, that were equally characteristic of the man and of a portion of his nation.

"Is it journeying south, or to the other end of this bit of wather, or ice, that yer honor is thinking of?" he cried. "Well, and there'll be room for us all, and to spare; for divil a bir-r-d will be left in that quarter by night, or forenent twelve o'clock either, calculating by the clock, if one had such a thing, as a body might say."

As this was said not only vehemently, but with an accent that defies imitation of the pen, Mrs. Willoughby was quite at a loss to get a clue to the idea; but her husband, more accustomed to men of Mike's class, was sufficiently lucky to comprehend what he was at.

"You mean the pigeons, Mike, I suppose," the captain answered good-humoredly. "There are certainly a goodly number of them; and I dare say our hunters will bring us in some for dinner. It is a certain sign that the winter is

gone, when birds and beasts follow their instincts in this manner. Where are you from, Mike?"

"County Leitrim, yer honor," answered the other, touching his cap.

"Aye, that one may guess," said the captain, smiling, "but where last?"

"From looking at the bir-r-ds, sir! Och! It's a sight that will do madam good, and contains a sartainty there'll be room enough made for us where all these cr'atures came from. I'm thinking, yer honor, if we don't ate *them*, they'll be wanting to ate *us*. What a power of them, counting big and little! though they're all of a size, just as much as if they had flown through a hole made on purpose to kape them down to a convanient bigness, in body and feathers."

"Such a flight of pigeons in Ireland would make a sensation, Mike," observed the captain, willing to amuse his wife by drawing out the county Leitrim-man a little.

"It would make a dinner, yer honor, for every mother's son of 'em, counting the gur-r-rls in the bargain! Such a power of bir-r-ds would knock down praties in a wonderful degree, and make even butthermilk chape and plenthiful. Will it be always such abundance with us down at the Huts, yer honor? or is this sight only a delusion to fill us with hopes that's never to be satisfied?"

"Pigeons are seldom wanting in this country, Mike, in the spring and autumn; though we have both birds and beasts in plenty, that are preferable for food."

"Will it be plenthier than this? Well, it's enough to destroy human appetite, the sight of 'em! I'd give the half joe I lost among them blackguards in Albany at their Pauss, as they calls it, jist to let my sister's childer have their supper out of one of these flocks, such as they are, betther or no betther. Och! it is pleasant to think of them childer having their will, for once, on such a power of wild, savage bir-r-ds!"

Captain Willoughby smiled at this proof of *naïveté* in his new domestic, and then led his wife back to the hut; it being time to make some fresh dispositions for the ap-

proaching movement. By noon, it became apparent to those who were waiting such an event, that the lake was opening; and, about the same time, one of the hunters came in from a neighboring mountain, and reported that he had seen clear water as near their position as three or four miles. By this time it was blowing fresh, and the wind having a clear rake, drove up the honeycomb-looking sheet before it, as the scraper accumulates snow. When the sun set, the whole north shore was white with piles of glittering icicles, while the bosom of the Otsego, no longer disturbed by the wind, resembled a placid mirror.

Early on the following morning the whole party embarked. There was no wind, and men were placed at the paddles and the oars. Care was taken on quitting the huts to close their doors and shutters; for they were to be taverns to cover the heads of many a traveller, in the frequent journeys that were likely to be made between the Knoll and the settlements. These stations, then, were of the last importance, and a frontier-man always had the same regard for them that the mountaineer of the Alps has for his "refuge."

The passage down the Otsego was the easiest and most agreeable portion of the whole journey. The day was pleasant, and the oarsmen vigorous, if not very skillful, rendering the movement rapid and sufficiently direct. But one drawback occurred to the prosperity of the voyage. Among the laborers hired by the captain was a Connecticut man of the name of Joel Strides, between whom and the county Leitrim-man there had early commenced a warfare of tricks and petty annoyances; a warfare that was perfectly defensive on the part of O'Hearn, who did little more in the way of retort, than comment on the long, lank, shapeless figure, and meagre countenance of his enemy. Joel had not been seen to smile since he engaged with the captain; though three times had he laughed outright, and each time at the occurrence of some mishap to Michael O'Hearn, the fruit of one of his own schemes of annoyance.

On the present occasion, Joel, who had the distribution of such duty, placed Mike in a skiff by himself, flattering

the poor fellow with the credit he would achieve by rowing a boat to the foot of the lake without assistance. He might as well have asked Mike to walk to the outlet on the surface of the water! This arrangement proceeded from an innate love of mischief in Joel, who had much of the quiet waggery, blended with many of the bad qualities, of the men of his peculiar class. A narrow and conceited selfishness lay at the root of the larger portion of this man's faults. As a physical being, he was a perfect labor-saving machine himself; bringing all the resources of a naturally quick and acute mind to bear on this one end, never doing anything that required a particle more than the exertion and strength that were absolutely necessary to effect his object. He rowed the skiff in which the captain and his wife had embarked with his own hands; and previously to starting, he had selected the best sculls from the other boats, had fitted his thwart with the closest attention to his own ease, and had placed a stretcher for his feet, with an intelligence and knowledge of mechanics, that would have done credit to a Whitehall waterman. This much proceeded from the predominating principle of his nature, which was always to have an eye on the interests of Joel Strides; though the effect happened in this instance to be beneficial to those he served.

Michael O'Hearn, on the contrary, thought only of the end; and this so intensely, not to say, so vehemently, as generally to overlook the means. Frank, generous, self-devoted, and withal accustomed to get most things wrong-end-foremost, he usually threw away twice the same labor in effecting a given purpose, that was expended by the Yankee; doing the thing worse, too, besides losing twice the time. He never paused to think of this, however. The *masther's* boat was to be rowed to the other end of the lake, and though he had never rowed a boat an inch in his life, he was ready and willing to undertake the job. "If a certain quantity of work will do it," thought Mike, "I'll try as much ag'in; and the divil is in it if that won't sarve the purpose of that little job."

Under such circumstances the party started. Most of

the skiffs and canoes went off half an hour before Mrs. Willoughby was ready, and Joel managed to keep Mike for the last, under the pretense of wishing his aid in loading his own boat with the bed and bedding from the hut. All was ready at length, and taking his seat with a sort of quiet deliberation, Joel said in his drawling way, "You'll follow us, Mike, and you can't be a thousand miles out of the way." Then he pulled from the shore with a quiet, steady stroke of the sculls, and sent the skiff ahead with great rapidity, though with much ease to himself.

Michael O'Hearn stood looking at the retiring skiff in silent admiration for two or three minutes. He was quite alone; for all the other boats were already two or three miles on their way, and distance already prevented him from seeing the mischief that was lurking in Joel's hypocritical eyes.

"Follow *yees!*" soliloquized Mike. "The divil burn ye, for a guessing Yankee as ye ar' — how am I to follow with such legs as the likes of these? If it wasn't for the masther and the missus, ra'al jontlemen and ladies they be, I'd turn my back on ye in the desert, and let ye find that Beaver estate, in yer own disagreeable company. Ha! well, I must thry, and if the boat won't go, it'll be no fault of the man that has a good disposition to make it."

Mike now took his seat on a board that lay across the gunwale of the skiff at a most inconvenient height, placed two sculls in the water, one of which was six inches longer than the other, made a desperate effort, and got his craft fairly afloat. Now, Michael O'Hearn was not left-handed, and, as usually happens with such men, the inequality between the two limbs was quite marked. By a sinister accident, too, it happened that the longest oar got into the strongest hand, and there it would have stayed to the end of time, before Mike would think of changing it on that account. Joel alone sat with his face towards the head of the lake, and he alone could see the dilemma in which the county Leitrim-man was placed. Neither the captain nor his wife thought of looking behind, and the Yankee had all the fun to himself. As for Mike, he succeeded in getting a

few rods from the land, when the strong arm and the longer lever asserting their superiority, the skiff began to incline to the westward. So intense, however, was the poor fellow's zeal, that he did not discover the change in his course until he had so far turned as to give him a glimpse of his retiring master; then he inferred that all was right, and pulled more leisurely. The result was, that in about ten minutes Mike was stopped by the land, the boat touching the north shore again, two or three rods from the very point whence it had started. The honest fellow got up, looked around him, scratched his head, gazed wistfully after the fast receding boat of his master, and broke out in another soliloquy.

"Bad luck to them that made ye, ye one-sided thing!" he said, shaking his head reproachfully at the skiff; "there's liberty for ye to do as ye ought, and ye'll not be doing it, just out of contrairiness. Why the divil can't ye do like the other skiffs, and go where ye're wanted, on the road towards thim beavers? Och, ye'll be sorry for this, when ye're left behind out of sight!"

Then it flashed on Mike's mind that possibly some article had been left in the hut, and the skiff had come back to look after it. So up he ran to the captain's deserted lodge, entered it, was lost to view for a minute, then came in sight again, scratching his head, and renewing his muttering: —

"No," he said, "divil a thing can I see, and it must be pure contrairiness! Perhaps the baste will behave bетther next time — so I'll try it ag'in, and give it an occasion. Barring obstinacy, 'tis as good-looking a skiff as the best of them."

Mike was as good as his word, and gave the skiff as fair an opportunity of behaving itself as was ever offered to a boat. Seven times did he quit the shore, and as often return to it, gradually working his way towards the western shore, and slightly down the lake. In this manner, Mike at length got himself so far on the side of the lake as to present a barrier of land to the evil disposition of his skiff to incline to the westward. It could go no longer in that direction at least.

"Divil burn ye," the honest fellow cried, the perspiration

rolling down his face; "I think ye'll be satisfied without walking out into the forest, where I wish ye war' with all my heart, among the threes that made ye! Now, I'll see if yer contrairy enough to run up hill."

Mike next essayed to pull along the shore, in the hope that the sight of the land, and of the overhanging pines and hemlocks, would cure the boat's propensity to turn in that direction. It is not necessary to say that his expectations were disappointed, and he finally was reduced to getting out into the water, cool as was the weather, and of wading along the shore, dragging the boat after him. All this Joel saw before he passed out of sight, but no movement of his muscles let the captain into the secret of the poor Irishman's strait.

In the mean while, the rest of the flotilla, or brigade of boats, as the captain termed them, went prosperously on their way, going from one end of the lake to the other in the course of three hours. As one of the party had been over the route several times already, there was no hesitation on the subject of the point to which the boats were to proceed. They all touched the shore near the stone that is now called the "Otsego Rock," beneath a steep wooded bank, and quite near to the place where the Susquehannah glanced out of the lake in a swift current, beneath a high arched tracery of branches that were not yet clothed with leaves.

Here the question was put as to what had become of Mike. His skiff was nowhere visible, and the captain felt the necessity of having him looked for before he proceeded any farther. After a short consultation, a boat manned by two negroes, father and son, named Pliny the elder and Pliny the younger, or, in common parlance, "Old Plin" and "Young Plin," was sent back along the west shore to hunt him up. Of course a hut was immediately prepared for the reception of Mrs. Willoughby, upon the plain that stretches across the valley at this point. This was on the site of the present village of Cooperstown, but just twenty years anterior to the commencement of the pretty little shire town that now exists on the spot.

It was night ere the two Plinies appeared, towing Mike, as their great namesakes of antiquity might have brought in a Carthaginian galley, in triumph. The county Leitrim-man had made his way with excessive toil about a league ere he was met, and glad enough was he to see his succor approach. In that day, the strong antipathy which now exists between the black and the emigrant Irishman was unknown, the competition for household service commencing more than half a century later. Still, as the negro loved fun constitutionally, and Pliny the younger was somewhat of a wag, Mike did not entirely escape scot-free.

"Why you drag 'im like ox, Irish Mike?" cried the younger negro. "Why you no row 'im like other folk?"

"Ah! you're as bad as the rest of 'em," growled Mike. "They tould me Ameriky was a mighty warm country, and war-r-m I find it, sure enough, though the wather isn't as warm as good whiskey. Come, ye black divils, and see if ye can coax this contrairy cr'ature to do as a person wants."

The negroes soon had Mike in tow, and then they went down the lake merrily, laughing and cracking their jokes at the Irishman's expense, after the fashion of their race. It was fortunate for the Leitrim-man that he was accustomed to ditching, through it may be questioned if the pores of his body closed again that day, so very effectually had they been opened. When he rejoined his master, not a syllable was said of the mishap, Joel having the prudence to keep his own secret, and even joining Mike in denouncing the bad qualities of the boat. We will only add here, that a little calculation entered into this trick, Joel perceiving that Mike was a favorite, and wishing to bring him into dis credit.

Early the next morning the captain sent the negroes and Mike down the Susquehannah a mile, to clear away some flood-wood, of which one of the hunters had brought in a report the preceding day. Two hours later, the boats left shore, and began to float downwards with the current, fol lowing the direction of a stream that has obtained its name from its sinuosities.

In a few minutes the boats reached the flood-wood, where, to Joel's great amusement, Mike and the negroes — the latter having little more calculation than the former — had commenced their operations on the upper side of the raft piling the logs on one another, with a view to make a passage through the centre. Of course, there was a halt, the females landing. Captain Willoughby now cast an eye round him in hesitation, when a knowing look from Joel caught his attention.

"This does not seem to be right," he said. "Cannot we better it a little?"

"It's right wrong, captain," answered Joel, laughing like one who enjoyed other people's ignorance. "A sensible crittur would begin the work on such a job at the lower side of the raft."

"Take the direction, and order things to suit yourself."

This was just what Joel liked. Head-work before all other work for him, and he set about the duty authoritatively and with promptitude. After rating the negroes roundly for their stupidity, and laying it on Mike without much delicacy of thought or diction, over the shoulders of the two blacks, he mustered his forces, and began to clear the channel with intelligence and readiness.

Going to the lower side of the jammed flood-wood, he soon succeeded in loosening one or two trees, which floated away, making room for others to follow. By these means a passage was effected in half an hour, Joel having the prudence to set no more timber in motion than was necessary to his purpose, lest it might choke the stream below. In this manner the party got through, and, the river being high at that season, by night the travellers were half-way to the mouth of the Unadilla. The next evening they encamped at the junction of the two streams, making their preparations to ascend the latter the following morning.

The toil of the ascent, however, did not commence until the boats entered what was called the creek, or the small tributary of the Unadilla, on which the beavers had erected their works, and which ran through the "Manor." Here, indeed, the progress was slow and laborious, the rapidity of

the current and the shallowness of the water rendering every foot gained a work of exertion and pain. Perseverance and skill, notwithstanding, prevailed; all the boats reaching the foot of the rapids, or straggling falls, on which the captain had built his mills, about an hour before the sun disappeared. Here, of course, the boats were left, a rude road having been cut, by means of which the freight was transported on a sled the remainder of the distance. Throughout the whole of this trying day, Joel had not only worked head-work, but he had actually exerted himself with his body. As for Mike, never before had he made such desperate efforts. He felt all the disgrace of his adventure on the lake, and was disposed to wipe it out by his exploits on the rivers. Thus Mike was ever loyal to his employer. He had sold his flesh and blood for money, and a man of his conscience was inclined to give a fair penny's-worth. The tractable manner in which the boat had floated down the river, it is true, caused him some surprise, as was shown in his remark to the younger Pliny, on landing.

"This is a curious boat, afther all," said Mike. "One time it's all contrairiness, and then ag'in it's as obliging as one's own mother. It followed the day all's one like a puppy dog, while you on the big wather there was no more dhriving it than a hog. Och! it's a faimale boat by its whims!"

CHAPTER III.

He sleeps, forgetful of his once bright fame;
He has no feeling of the glory gone ;
He has no eye to catch the mountain flame
That once in transport drew him on ;
He lies in dull, oblivious dreams, nor cares
Who the wreathed laurel bears.

PERCIVAL.

THE appearance of a place in which the remainder of one's life is to be passed is always noted with interest on a first visit. Thus it was that Mrs. Willoughby had been observant and silent from the moment the captain informed her that they had passed the line of his estate, and were approaching the spot where they were to dwell. The stream was so small, and the girding of the forest so close, that there was little range for the sight; but the anxious wife and mother could perceive that the hills drew together at this point, the valley narrowing essentially, that rocks began to appear in the bed of the river, and that the growth of the timber indicated fertility and a generous soil.

When the boat stopped, the little stream came brawling down a ragged declivity, and a mill, one so arranged as to grind and saw, both in a very small way, however, gave the first signs of civilization she had beheld since quitting the last hut near the Mohawk. After issuing a few orders, the captain drew his wife's arm through his own, and hurried up the ascent with an eagerness that was almost boyish, to show her what had been done towards the improvement of the "Knoll." There is a pleasure in diving into a virgin forest and commencing the labors of civilization, that has no exact parallel in any other human occupation. That of building, or of laying out grounds, has certainly some resemblance to it, but it is a

resemblance so faint and distant as scarcely to liken the enjoyment each produces. The former approaches nearer to the feeling of creating, and is far more pregnant with anticipations and hopes, though its first effects are seldom agreeable, and are sometimes nearly hideous. Our captain, however, had escaped most of these last consequences, by possessing the advantage of having a clearing, without going through the usual processes of chopping and burning; the first of which leaves the earth dotted for many years with unsightly stumps, while the rains and snows do not wash out the hues of the last for several seasons.

An exclamation betrayed the pleasure with which Mrs. Willoughby got her first glimpse of the drained pond. It was when she had clambered to the point of the rocks where the stream began to tumble downwards into the valley below. A year had done a vast deal for the place. The few stumps and stubs which had disfigured the basin when it was first laid bare had all been drawn by oxen and burned. This left the entire surface of the four hundred acres smooth and fit for the plough. The soil was the deposit of centuries, and the inclination from the woods to the stream was scarcely perceptible to the eye. In fact, it was barely sufficient to drain the drippings of the winter's snows. The form of the area was a little irregular; just enough so to be picturesque; while the inequalities were surprisingly few and trifling. In a word, nature had formed just such a spot as delights the husbandman's heart, and placed it beneath a sun which, while its fierceness is relieved by winters of frost and snow, has a power to bring out all its latent resources.

Trees had been felled around the whole area, with the open spaces filled by branches, in a way to form what is termed a brush fence. This is not a sightly object, and the captain had ordered the line to be drawn within the woods, so that the visible boundaries of the open land were the virgin forest itself. His men had protested against this, a fence, however unseemly, being in their view an indispensable accessory to civilization. But the captain's authority, if not his better taste, prevailed; and the boundary of felled trees and brush was completely concealed in the background

of woods. As yet there was no necessity for cross-fences, the whole open space lying in a single field. One hundred acres were in winter wheat. As this grain had been got in the previous autumn, it was now standing on the finest and dryest of the soil, giving an air of rich fertility to the whole basin. Grass-seed had been sown along both banks of the stream, and its waters were quietly flowing between two wide belts of fresh verdure, the young plants having already started in that sheltered receptacle of the sun's rays. Other portions of the flat showed signs of improvement, the plough having actually been at work for quite a fortnight.

All this was far more than even the captain had expected, and much more than his wife had dared to hope. Mrs. Willoughby had been accustomed to witness the slow progress of a new settlement; but never before had she seen what might be done on a beaver-dam. To her, all appeared like magic, and her first question would have been to ask her husband to explain what had been done with the trees and stumps, had not her future residence caught her eye. Captain Willoughby had left his orders concerning the house previously to quitting the Knoll; and he was now well pleased to perceive that they had been attended to. As this spot will prove the scene of many of the incidents we are bound to relate, it may be proper here to describe it at some length.

The hillock that rose out of the pond, in the form of a rocky little island, was one of those capricious formations that are often met with on the surface of the earth. It stood about thirty rods from the northern side of the area, very nearly central as to its eastern and western boundaries, and presented a slope inclining towards the south. Its greatest height was at its northern end, where it rose out of the rich alluvion of the soil, literally a rock of some forty feet in perpendicular height, having a summit of about an acre of level land, and falling off on its three sides; to the east and west precipitously; to the south quite gently and with regularity. It was this accidental formation which had induced the captain to select the spot as the site of his residence; for, dwelling so far from any post, and in a place so

difficult of access, something like military defenses were merely precautions of ordinary prudence. While the pond remained, the islet was susceptible of being made very strong against any of the usual assaults of Indian warfare; and now that the basin was drained, it had great advantages for the same purpose. The perpendicular rock to the north even overhung the plain. It was almost inaccessible; while the formation on the other sides offered singular facilities both for a dwelling and for security. All this the captain, who was so familiar with the finesse of Indian stratagem, had resolved to improve in the following manner: —

In the first place he directed the men to build a massive wall of stone, for a hundred and fifty feet in length, and six feet in height. This stretched in front of the perpendicular rock, with receding walls to its verge. The latter were about two hundred feet in length, each. This was inclosing an area of two hundred by one hundred and fifty feet, within a blind wall of masonry. Through this wall there was only a single passage; a gateway in the centre of its southern face. The materials had all been found on the hill itself, which was well covered with heavy stones. Within this wall, which was substantially laid by a Scotch mason, one accustomed to the craft, the men had erected a building of massive, squared, pine timber, well secured by cross partitions. This building followed the wall in its whole extent, was just fifteen feet in elevation without the roof, and was composed in part by the wall itself; the latter forming nearly one half its height on the exterior. The breadth of this edifice was only twenty feet, clear of the stones and wood-work; leaving a court within of about one hundred by one hundred and seventy-five in extent. The roof extended over the gateway even; so that the space within was completely covered, the gates being closed. This much had been done during the preceding fall and winter; the edifice presenting an appearance of rude completeness on the exterior. Still it had a sombre and jail-like air; there being nothing resembling a window visible; no aperture, indeed, on either side of its outer faces, but the open gateway, of which the massive leaves were finished and placed

against the adjacent walls, but which were not yet hung. It is scarcely necessary to say this house resembled barracks, more than an ordinary dwelling. Mrs. Willoughby stood gazing at it, half in doubt whether to admire or to condemn, when a voice within a few yards suddenly drew her attention in another direction.

"How you like him?" asked Nick, who was seated on a stone at the margin of the stream, washing his feet after a long day's hunt. "No t'ink him better dan beaver skin? Cap'in know all 'bout him; now he give Nick some more last quit-rent?"

"Last, indeed, it will be then, Nick; for I have already paid you twice for your rights."

"Discovery wort' great deal, cap'in — see what great man he make pale-face."

"Aye, but your discovery, Nick, is not of that sort."

"What sort, den?" demanded Nick, with the rapidity of lightning. "Give him back 'e beaver if you no like he discovery. Grad to see 'em back again; skin higher price dan ever."

"Nick, you're a cormorant, if there ever was one in this world! Here — there is a dollar for you; the quit-rent is paid for this year at least. It ought to be for the last time."

"Let him go for all summer, cap'in. Yes, Nick wonderful commerant! no such eye he got among Oneida!"

Here the Tuscarora left the side of the stream and came up on the rock, shaking hands good-humoredly with Mrs. Willoughby, who rather liked the knave, though she knew him to possess most of the vices of his class.

"He very han'some beaver-dam," said Nick, sweeping his hand gracefully over the view; "by'm-by, he'll bring potato, and corn, and cider — all 'e squaw want. Cap'in got good fort, too. Old soldier love fort; like to live in him."

"The day may come, Nick, when that fort may serve us all a good turn out here in the wilderness," Mrs. Willoughby observed, in a somewhat melancholy tone; for her tender thoughts naturally turned towards her youthful and innocent daughters.

The Indian gazed at the house with that fierce intentness which sometimes glared in a manner that had got to be, in its ordinary aspects, dull and besotted. There was a startling intelligence in his eye at such moments; the feelings of youth and earlier habit once more asserting their power. Twenty years before Nick had been foremost on the war-path; and what was scarcely less honorable, among the wisest around the council-fire. He was born a chief, and had made himself an outcast from his tribe, more by the excess of ungovernable passions, than from any act of base meanness.

"Cap'in tell Nick, now, what he mean by building such house out here, among ole beaver bones?" he said, sidling up nearer to his employer, and gazing with some curiosity into his face.

"What do I mean, Nick? Why, I mean to have a place of safety to put the heads of my wife and children in at need. The road to Canada is not so long but a red-skin can make one pair of moccasins go over it. Then the Oneidas and Mohawks are not all children of heaven."

"No pale-face rogue go about, I s'pose?" said Nick, sarcastically.

"Yes, there are men of that class who are none the worse for being locked out of one's house at times. But what do you think of the hut? You know I call the place the 'Hut,' the Hutted Knoll."

"He hole plenty of beaver, if you cotch him! But no water left, and he all go away. Why you make him stone, first; den you make him wood, a'ter — eh? Plenty rock; plenty tree."

"Why, the stone wall can neither be cut away nor set fire to, Nick; that's the reason. I took as much stone as was necessary, and then used wood, which is more easily worked, and which is also dryer."

"Good — Nick t'ought just dat. How you get him water if Injin come?"

"There's the stream that winds round the foot of the hill, Nick, as you see; and there is a delicious spring within one hundred yards of the very gate."

"Which side of him?" asked Nick, with his startling rapidity.

"Why, here, to the left of the gate, and a little to the right of the large stone" —

"No, no," interrupted the Indian, "no left — no right — which side; inside gate — outside gate?"

"Oh! the spring is outside the gate, certainly; but means might be found to make a covered way to it; and then the stream winds round directly underneath the rocks behind the house, and water could be raised from that by means of a rope. Our rifles would count for something, too, in drawing water as well as in drawing blood."

"Good! Rifle got long arm. He talk so, Injin mind him. When you t'ink red-skin come agin your fort, cap'in, now you got him done?"

"A long time first, I hope, Nick. We are at peace with France again; and I see no prospect of any new quarrel very soon. So long as the French and English are at peace, the red-men will not dare to touch either."

"Dat true as missionary. What a soldier do, cap'in, if so much peace? Warrior love war-path."

"I wish it were not so, Nick. But my hatchet is buried, I hope forever."

"Nick hope cap'in know where to find him if he want to? Very bad to put anyt'ing where he forget; partic'larly tomahawk. Sometime quarrel come like rain, when you don't tink."

"Yes, that also cannot be denied. Yet I fear the next quarrel will be among ourselves, Nick. The government at home and the people of the colonies are getting to have bad blood between them."

"Dat very queer! Why pale-face moder and pale-face darter no love one anoder, like red-skin?"

"Really, Nick, you are somewhat interrogating this evening; but my squaw must be a little desirous of seeing the inside of her house as well as its outside, and I must refer you to that honest fellow yonder for an answer. His name is Mike; I hope he and you will always be good friends."

So saying, the captain nodded in a friendly manner, and led Mrs. Willoughby towards the hut, taking a foot-path that was already trodden firm, and which followed the sinuosities of the stream, to which it served as a sort of a dyke. Nick took the captain at his word, and turning about, he met the county Leitrim-man with an air of great blandness, thrusting out a hand in the pale-face fashion, as a sign of amity, saying at the same time, —

"How do, Mike? Sago — sago — grad you come. Good fellow to drink Santa Cruz wid Nick."

"How do, Mike!" exclaimed the other, looking at the Tuscarora with astonishment; for this was positively the first red-man the Irishman had ever seen. "How do, Mike! Ould Nick be ye? Well, you look pretty much as I ex pected to see you. Pray, how did you come to know my name?"

"Nick know him — know everyt'ing. Grad to see you, Mike. Hope we live together like good friend, down yonder, up here, over dere."

"Ye do, do ye! Divil burn me, now, if I want any sich company. Ould Nick's yer name, is it?"

"Old Nick — young Nick — saucy Nick; all one, all t'other. Make no odd what ye call. I come."

"Och, ye're a handy one! Divil trust ye, but ye'll come when you aren't wanted, or ye're not of yer father's own family. D'ye live hereabouts, Masther Ould Nick?"

"Live here — out yonder — in he hut, in he wood — where he want. Make no difference to Nick."

Michael now drew back a pace or two, keeping his eyes fastened on the other intently; for he actually expected to see some prodigious and sudden change in his appearance. When he thought he had got a good position for manly defense or rapid retreat, as either might become necessary, the county Leitrim-man put on a bolder front and resumed the discourse.

"If it's so indifferent to ye where ye dwell," asked Mike, 'why can't you keep at home, and let a body carry these cloaks and bundles of the missuses out yonder to the house whither she's gone?"

"Nick help carry 'em. Carry t'ing for dat squaw hundred time."

"That what! D'ye mane Madam Willoughby by yer blackguard name?"

"Yes; cap'in wife — cap'in squaw, mean him. Carry bundle, basket, hundred time for him."

"The Lord preserve me, now, from sich atrocity and impudence!" laying down the cloaks and bundles, and facing the Indian with an appearance of great indignation. "Did a body ever hear sich a liar! Why, Misther Ould Nick, Madam Willoughby wouldn't let the likes of ye touch the ind of her garments. You wouldn't get the liberty to walk in the same path with her — much less to carry her bundles. I'll answer for it, ye're a great liar, now, Ould Nick, in the bottom of your heart."

"Nick great liar," answered the Indian good-naturedly; for he so well knew this was his common reputation, that he saw no use in denying it. "What of dat? Lie good sometime."

"That's another! Oh, ye animal, I've a great mind to set upon ye at once, and see what an honest man can do wid ye in fair fight! If I only knew what ye'd got about yer toes, now, under them fine-looking things ye wear for shoes, once, I'd taich ye to talk of the missus in this style."

"Speak as well as he know how. Nick never been to school. Call 'e squaw — good squaw. What want more?"

"Get out! If ye come a foot nearer, I'll be at ye like a dog upon a bull, though ye gore me. What brought ye into this paiceful sittlement, where nothing but virtue and honesty have taken up their abode?"

What more Mike might have said, is not known, as Nick caught a sign from the captain, and went loping across the flat, at his customary gait, leaving the Irishman standing on the defensive, and, to own the truth, not sorry to be rid of him. Unfortunately for the immediate enlightenment of Mike's mind, Joel overheard the dialogue, and comprehending its meaning with his native readiness, he joined his companion in a mood but little disposed to clear up the error.

"Did ye see that cr'ature?" asked Mike, with emphasis.

"Sartain — he is often seen here, at the Hut. He may be said to live here, half his time."

"A pritty Hut, then, ye must have of it! Why do ye tolerate the vagabond? He's not fit for Christian society."

"Oh! he's good company sometimes, Mike. When you know him better, you'll like him better. Come; up with the bundles, and let us follow. The captain is looking after us, as you see."

"Well may he look, to see us in sich company! Will he har-r-m the missus?"

"Not he.. I tell you, you'll like him yourself when you come to know him."

"If I do, burn me! Why, he says himself that he's Ould Nick, and I'm sure I never fancied the cr'ature but it was in just some such for-r-m. Och! he's ill-looking enough for twenty Ould Nicks."

Lest the reader get an exaggerated notion of Michael's credulity, it may be well to say that Nick had painted a few days before, in a fit of caprice, and that one half of his face was black, and the other a deep red, while each of his eyes was surrounded with a circle of white, all of which had got to be a little confused in consequence of a night or two of orgies, succeeded by mornings in which the toilet had been altogether neglected. His dress, too, a blanket with tawdry red and yellow trimmings, with ornamented leggings and moccasins to correspond, had all aided in maintaining the accidental mystification. Mike followed his companion, growling out his discontent, and watching the form of the Indian, as the latter still went loping over the flat, having passed the captain, with a message to the barns.

"I'll warrant ye now, the captain wouldn't tolerate such a cr'ature, but he's sent him off to the woods, as ye may see, like a divil as he is! To think of such a thing's spaking to the missus! Will I fight him? That will I, rather than he'll say an uncivil word to the likes of her! He's claws, they tell me, though he kapes them so well covered in his fine brogues; divil burn me, but I'd grapple him by the toes."

Joel now saw how deep was Michael's delusion, and know-

ing it must soon be over, he determined to make a merit of necessity, by letting his friend into the truth, thereby creating a confidence that would open the way to a hundred future mischievous scenes.

"Claws!" he repeated, with an air of surprise; "and why do you think an Injin has claws, Mike?"

"An Injin! D'ye call that miscolored cr'ature an Injin, Joel? Isn't it one of yer Yankee divils?"

"Out upon you, for an Irish ninny. Do you think the captain would board a divil! The fellow's a Tuscarora, and is as well known here as the owner of the Hut himself. It's Saucy Nick."

"Yes, saucy Ould Nick — I had it from his very mout', and even the divil would hardly be such a blackguard as to lie about his own name. Och! he's a roarer, sure enough; and then for the tusks you mintion, I didn't see 'em with my eyes; but the cr'ature has a mouth that might hold a basket-full."

Joel now perceived that he must go more seriously to work to undeceive his companion. Mike honestly believed he had met an American devil, and it required no little argumentation to persuade him of the contrary. We shall leave Joel employed in this difficult task, in which he finally succeeded, and follow the captain and his wife to the hut.

The lord and lady of the manor examined everything around their future residence with curious eyes. Jamie Allen, the Scotch mason mentioned, was standing in front of the house, to hear what might be said of his wall, while two or three other mechanics betrayed some such agitation, as the tyro in literature manifests, ere he learns what the critics have said of his first work. The exterior gave great satisfaction to the captain. The wall was not only solid and secure, but it was really handsome. This was in some measure owing to the quality of the stones, but quite as much to Jamie's dexterity in using them. The wall and chimneys, of the latter of which there were no less than six, were all laid in lime too; it having been found necessary to burn some of the material to plaster the interior. Then the gates were massive, being framed in oak, filled in with

four-inch plank, and might have resisted a very formidable assault. Their strong iron hinges were all in their places, but the heavy job of hanging had been deferred to a leisure moment, when all the strength of the manor might be collected for that purpose. There they stood, inclining against the wall, one on each side of the gate-way, like indolent sentinels on post, who felt too secure from attack to raise their eyes.

The different mechanics crowded round the captain, each eager to show his own portion of what had been done. The winter had not been wasted, but proper materials being in abundance, and on the spot, Captain Willoughby had every reason to be satisfied with what he got for his money. Completely shut out from the rest of the world, the men had worked cheerfully, and with little interruption, for their labors composed their recreation. Mrs. Willoughby found the part of the building her family was to occupy, with the usual offices, done and furnished. This comprised all the front on the eastern side of the gateway, and most of the wing in the same half, extending back to the cliff. It is true, the finish was plain, but everything was comfortable. The ceilings were only ten feet high, certainly, but it was thought prodigious in the colony in that day; and then the plastering of Jamie was by no means as unexceptionable as his stone-work; still every room had its two coats, and whitewash gave them a clean and healthful aspect. The end of the wing that came next the cliff was a laundry, and a pump was fitted, by means of which water was raised from the rivulet. Next came the kitchen, a spacious and comfortable room of thirty by twenty feet; an upper servant's apartment succeeded; after which were the bedrooms of the family, a large parlor, and a library or office for the captain. As the entire range on this particular side of the house extended nearly or quite two hundred and fifty feet, there was no want of space or accommodation.

The opposite or western half of the edifice was devoted to more homely uses. It contained an eating-room and divers sleeping-rooms for the domestics and laborers, besides store-rooms, garners, and *omnium gatherums* of all sorts.

The vast ranges of garrets, too, answered for various purposes of household and farming economy. All the windows and sundry doors opened into the court, while the whole of the exterior wall, both wooden and stone, presented a perfect blank, in the way of outlets. It was the captain's intention, however, to cut divers loops through the logs, at some convenient moment, so that men stationed in the garrets might command the different faces of the structure with their musketry. But, like the gates, these means of defense were laid aside for a more favorable opportunity.

Our excellent matron was delighted with her domestic arrangements. They much surpassed any of the various barracks in which she had dwelt, and a smile of happiness beamed on her handsome face, as she followed her husband from room to room, listening to his explanations. When they entered their private apartments, and these were furnished and ready to receive them, respect caused the rest to leave them by themselves, and once more they found that they were alone.

"Well, Wilhelmina," asked the gratified husband — gratified, because he saw pleasure beaming in the mild countenance and serene blue eyes of one of the best wives living — "well, Wilhelmina," he asked, "can you give up Albany, and all the comforts of your friends' dwellings, to be satisfied in a home like this? It is not probable I shall ever build again, whatever Bob may do, when he comes after me. This structure, then, part house, part barrack, part fort, as it is, must be our residence for the remainder of our days. We are hutted for life."

"It is all-sufficient, Willoughby. It has space, comfort, warmth, coolness, and security. What more can a wife and a mother ask, when she is surrounded by those she most loves? Only attend to the security, Hugh. Remember how far we are removed from any succor, and how sudden and fierce the Indians are in their attacks. Twice have we ourselves been near being destroyed by surprises, from which accident, or God's providence, protected us, rather than our own vigilance. If this could happen in garrisons, and with king's troops around us, how much more easily

might it happen here, with only common laborers to watch what is going on!"

"You exaggerate the danger, wife. There are no Indians in this part of the country who would dare to molest a settlement like ours. We count thirteen able-bodied men in all, besides seven women, and could use seventeen or eighteen muskets and rifles on an emergency. No tribe would dare commence hostilities in a time of general peace, and so near the settlements too; and as to stragglers, who might indeed murder to rob, we are so strong ourselves, that we may sleep in peace, so far as they are concerned."

"One never knows that, dearest Hugh. A marauding party of half a dozen might prove too much for many times their own number, when unprepared. I do hope you will have the gates hung, at least; should the girls come here in the autumn, I could not sleep without hanging the gates."

"Fear nothing, love," said the captain, kissing his wife with manly tenderness. "As for Beulah and Maud, let them come when they please; we shall always have a welcome for them, and no place can be safer than under their father's eyes."

"I care not so much for myself, Hugh, but do not let the gates be forgotten until the girls come."

"Everything shall be done as you desire, wife of mine, though it will be a hard job to get two such confounded heavy loads of wood on their hinges. We must take some day when everybody is at home, and everybody willing to work. Saturday next I intend to have a review, and once a month, the year round, there will be a muster, when all the arms are to be cleaned and loaded, and orders given how to act in case of an alarm. An old soldier would be disgraced to allow himself to be run down by mere vagabonds. My pride is concerned, and you may sleep in peace."

"Yes, do, dearest Hugh." Then the matron proceeded through the rooms, expressing her satisfaction at the care which had been had for her comfort, in her own rooms in particular.

Sooth to say, the interior of the Hut presented that odd contrast between civilization and rude expedients, which so

frequently occurs on an American frontier, where persons educated in refinement often find themselves brought in close collision with savage life. Carpets, in America, and in the year of our Lord 1765, were not quite as much a matter of course in domestic economy as they are to-day. Still they were to be found, though it was rare, indeed, that they covered more than the centre of the room. One of these great essentials, without which no place can appear comfortable in a cold climate, was spread on the floor of Mrs. Willoughby's parlor — a room that served for both eating and as a sala, the Knight's Hall of the Hut, measuring twenty by twenty-four feet — though in fact this carpet concealed exactly two thirds of the white, clean plank. Then the chairs were massive, and even rich, while one might see his face in the dark mahogany of the tables. There were cellarets, the captain being a connoisseur in wines; bureaus, secrétaires, beaufets, and other similar articles, that had been procured in the course of twenty years' housekeeping, and scattered at different posts, were collected, and brought hither by means of sledges and the facilities of the water-courses. Fashion had little to do with furniture in that simple age, when the son did not hesitate to wear even the clothes of the father, years and years after the tailor had taken leave of them. Massive old furniture, in particular, lasted for generations; and our matron now saw many articles that had belonged to her grandfather, assembled beneath the first roof that she could ever strictly call her own.

Mrs. Willoughby took a survey of the offices last. Here she found, already established, the two Plinies, with Mari', the sister of the elder Pliny, Bess, the wife of the younger, and 'Mony — alias Desdemona — a collateral of the race, by ties and affinities that garter-king-at-arms could not have traced genealogically; since he would have been puzzled to say whether the woman was the cousin, or aunt, or stepdaughter of Mari', or all three. All the women were hard at work, Bess singing in a voice that reached the adjoining forest. Mari' — this name was pronounced with a strong emphasis on the last syllable, or like Maria, without the final vowel — Mari' was the head of the kitchen, even Pliny

the elder standing in salutary dread of her authority, and her orders to her brother and nephew were pouring forth, in an English that was divided into three categories — the Anglo Saxon, the Low Dutch, and the Guinea dialect; a medley that rendered her discourse a droll assemblage of the vulgar and the classical.

"Here, niggers," she cried, "why you don't jump about like Paus dance? Ebberyt'ing want a hand, and some want a foot. Plate to wash, crockery to open, water to b'ile, dem knife to clean, and not'ing missed. Lord, here's a madam, and 'e whole kitchen in a diffusion."

"Well, Mari'," exclaimed the captain, good-naturedly, "here you are, scolding away as if you had been in the place these six months, and knew all its faults and weaknesses."

"Can't help a scold, master, in sich a time as dis — come away from dem plates, you Great Smash, and let a proper hand take hold on 'em."

Here we ought to say, that Captain Willoughby had christened Bess by the sobriquet of Great Smash, on account of her size, which fell little short of two hundred, estimated in pounds, and a certain facility she possessed in destroying crockery, while 'Mony went by the milder appellation of "Little Smash;" not that bowls or plates fared any better in her hands, but because she weighed only one hundred and eighty.

"Dis is what I tell 'em, master," continued Mari', in a remonstrating argumentative sort of a tone, with dogmatism and respect singularly mingled in her manner; "dis, massa, just what I tell 'em all. I tell 'em, says I, this is Hunter Knoll, and not Allbonny; here no store — no place to buy t'ing if you break 'em; no good woman who know ebberyt'ing, to tell you where to find t'ing, if you lose him. If dere was only good woman, dat somet'ing; but no fortun'-teller out here in the bushes; no, no — when a silber spoon go, here, he go for good and all — Goody, massy!" — staring at something in the court — "what he call dat, sa?"

"That — oh! that is only an Indian hunter I keep about me, to bring us game; you'll never have an empty spit,

Mari', as long as he is with us. Fear nothing; he will not harm you. His name is Nick."

"De Old Nick, massa?"

"No, only Saucy Nick. The fellow is a little slovenly to-day in his appearance, and you see he has brought already several partridges, besides a rabbit. We shall have venison in the season."

Here all the negroes, after staring at Nick quite a minute, set up a loud shout, laughing as if the Tuscarora had been created for their special amusement. Although the captain was somewhat of a martinet in his domestic discipline, it had ever altogether exceeded his authority, or his art, to prevent these bursts of merriment; and he led his wife away from the din, leaving Mari', Great Smash, and Little Smash, with the two Plinies, in ecstasies at their own uproar. Burst succeeded burst, until the Indian walked away in offended dignity.

Such was the commencement of the domestication of the Willoughbys at the Hutted Knoll. The plan of our tale does not require us to follow them minutely for the few succeeding years, though some further explanation may be necessary to show why this settlement varied a little from the ordinary course.

That very season, or in the summer of 1765, Mrs. Willoughby inherited some real estate in Albany, by the death of an uncle, as well as a few thousand pounds currency, in ready money. This addition to his fortune made the captain exceedingly comfortable, or, for that day, rich; and it left him to act his pleasure as related to his lands. Situated as these last were, so remote from other settlements as to render highways for some time hopeless, he saw no use in endeavoring to anticipate the natural order of things. It would only create embarrassment to raise produce that could not be sent to market; and he well knew that a population of any amount could not exist, in quiet, without the usual attendants of buying and selling. Then it suited his own taste to be the commander-in-chief of an isolated establishment like this; and he was content to live in abundance on his flats, feeding his people, his cattle, and even his hogs

to satiety, and having wherewithal to send away the occasional adventurer, who entered his clearing, contented and happy.

Thus it was that he neither sold nor leased. No person dwelt on his land who was not a direct dependent, or hireling, and all that the earth yielded he could call his own. Nothing was sent abroad for sale but cattle. Every year a small drove of fat beeves and milch cows found their way through the forest to Albany, and the proceeds returned in the shape of foreign supplies. The rents and the interests on bonds were left to accumulate, or were applied to aid Robert in obtaining a new step in the army. Lands began to be granted nearer and nearer to his own, and here and there some old officer like himself, or a solitary farmer, began to cut away the wilderness, but none in his immediate vicinity.

Still the captain did not live altogether as a hermit. He visited Edmeston of Mount Edmeston, a neighbor less than fifty miles distant; was occasionally seen at Johnson Hall, with Sir William; or at the bachelor establishment of Sir John, on the Mohawk; and once or twice he so far overcame his indolence as to consent to serve as a member for a new county, that was called Tryon, after a ruling governor.

CHAPTER IV.

Hail ! sober evening ! Thee the harassed brain
And aching heart with fond orisons greet ;
The respite thou of toil ; the balm of pain ;
To thoughtful mind the hour for musing meet.
'Tis then the sage from forth his lone retreat,
The rolling universe around espies ;
'Tis then the bard may hold communion sweet
With lovely shapes unkenned by grosser eyes,
And quick perception comes of finer mysteries.

SANDS.

IN the preceding chapter we closed the minute narrative with a scene at the Hut, in the spring of 1765. We must now advance the time just ten years, opening, anew, in the month of May, 1775. This, it is scarcely necessary to tell the reader, is bringing him at once up to the earliest days of the Revolution. The contest which preceded that great event had in fact occurred in the intervening time, and we are now about to plunge into the current of some of the minor incidents of the struggle itself.

Ten years are a century in the history of a perfectly new settlement. The changes they produce are even surprising, though in ordinary cases they do not suffice to erase the signs of a recent origin. The forest is opened, and the light of day admitted, it is true ; but its remains are still to be seen in multitudes of unsightly stumps, dead standing trees, and ill-looking stubs. These vestiges of the savage state usually remain a quarter of a century ; in certain regions they are to be found for even more than twice that period. All this, however, had Captain Willoughby escaped, in consequence of limiting his clearing, in a great measure, to that which had been made by the beavers, and from which time and natural decay had, long before his arrival, removed every ungainly object. It is true, here and there a few acres had been cleared on

the firmer ground, at the margin of the flats, where barn and farm buildings had been built, and orchards planted; but, in order to preserve the harmony of his view, the captain had caused all the stumps to be pulled and burnt, giving to these places the same air of agricultural finish as characterized the fields on the lower land.

To this sylvan scene, at a moment which preceded the setting of the sun by a little more than an hour, and in the first week of the genial month of May, we must now bring the reader in fancy. The season had been early, and the Beaver Manor, or the part of it which was cultivated, lying low and sheltered, vegetation had advanced considerably beyond the point that is usual, at that date, in the elevated region of which we have been writing. The meadows were green with matted grasses, the wheat and rye resembled rich velvets, and the ploughed fields had the fresh and mellowed appearance of good husbandry and a rich soil. The shrubbery, of which the captain's English taste had introduced quantities, was already in leaf, and even portions of the forest began to veil their sombre mysteries with the delicate foliage of an American spring.

The site of the ancient pond was a miracle of rustic beauty. Everything like inequality or imperfection had disappeared, the whole presenting a broad and picturesquely shaped basin, with outlines fashioned principally by nature, an artist that rarely fails in effect. The flat was divided into fields by low post-and-rail fences, the captain making it a law to banish all unruly animals from his estate. The barns and out-buildings were neatly made and judiciously placed, and the three or four roads, or lanes, that led to them, crossed the low-land in such graceful curves, as greatly to increase the beauty of the landscape. Here and there a log cabin was visible, nearly buried in the forest, with a few necessary and neat appliances around it; the homes of laborers who had long dwelt in them, and who seemed content to pass their lives in the same place. As most of these men had married and become fathers, the whole colony, including

children, notwithstanding the captain's policy not to settle, had grown to considerably more than a hundred souls, of whom three-and-twenty were able-bodied men. Among the latter were the millers; but their mills were buried in the ravine where they had been first placed, quite out of sight from the picture above, concealing all the unavoidable and ungainly-looking objects of a saw-mill yard.

As a matter of course, the object of the greatest interest, as it was the most conspicuous, was the Hutted Knoll, as the house was now altogether called, and the objects it contained. Thither, then, we will now direct our attention, and describe things as they appeared ten years after they were first presented to the reader.

The same agricultural finish as prevailed on the flats pervaded every object on the Knoll, though some labor had been expended to produce it. Everything like a visible rock, the face of the cliff on the northern end excepted, had disappeared, the stones having been blasted and either worked into walls for foundations, or walls for fence. The entire base of the Knoll, always excepting the little precipice at the rivulet, was encircled by one of the latter, erected under the superintendence of Jamie Allen, who still remained at the Hut, a bachelor, and as he said himself, a happy man. The southern face of the Knoll was converted into a lawn, there being quite two acres intersected with walks, and well garnished with shrubbery. What was unusual in America at that day, the captain, owing to his English education, had avoided straight lines and formal paths; giving to the little spot the improvement on nature which is a consequence of embellishing her works without destroying them. On each side of this lawn was an orchard, thrifty and young, in which the trees were already beginning to show signs of putting forth their blossoms.

About the Hut itself the appearance of change was not so manifest. Captain Willoughby had caused it to be constructed originally as he intended to preserve it, and it formed no part of his plan to cover it with tawdry colors. There it stood, brown above, and gray beneath, as wood

or stone was the material, with a widely projecting roof. It had no piazzas, or stoops, and was still without external windows, one range excepted. The loops had been cut, but it was more for the benefit of lighting the garrets than for any other reason, all of them being glazed, and serving the end for which they had been pierced. The gates remained precisely in the situation in which they were when last presented to the eye of the reader! There they stood, each leaning against the wall on its own side of the gateway, the hinges beginning to rust by time and exposure. Ten years had not produced a day of sufficient leisure in which to hang them; though Mrs. Willoughby frequently spoke of the necessity of doing so, in the course of the first summer. Even she had got to be so familiarized to her situation, and so accustomed to seeing the leaves where they stood, that she now regarded them as a couple of sleeping lions in stone, or as characteristic ornaments, rather than as substantial defenses to the entrance of the dwelling.

The interior of the Hut, however, had undergone many alterations. The western half had been completed, and handsome rooms had been fitted up for guests and inmates of the family in the portion of the edifice occupied by the latter. Additional comforts had been introduced, and the garners, cribs, and lodgings of the laborers having been transferred to the skirts of the forest, the house was more strictly and exclusively the abode of a respectable and well-regulated family. In the rear, too, a wing had been thrown along the verge of the cliff, completely inclosing the court. This wing, which overhung the rivulet, and had not only a most picturesque site, but a most picturesque and lovely view, now contained the library, parlor, and music-room, together with other apartments devoted to the uses of the ladies during the day; the old portions of the house that had once been similarly occupied being now converted into sleeping apartments. The new wing was constructed entirely of massive squared logs, so as to render it bullet-proof, there being no necessity for a stone foundation, standing, as it did, on the verge of a cliff some forty feet

in height. This was the part of the edifice which had external windows, the elevation removing it from the danger of inroads or hostile shot, while the air and view were both grateful and desirable. Some extra attention had been paid to the appearance of the meadows on this side of the Knoll, and the captain had studiously kept their skirts, as far as the eye could see from the windows, in virgin forest; placing the barns, cabins, and other detached buildings, so far south as to be removed from view. Beulah Willoughby, a gentle, tranquil creature, had a profound admiration of the beauties of nature; and to her her parents had yielded the control of everything that was considered accessory to the mere charms of the eye; her taste had directed most of that which had not been effected by the noble luxuriance of nature. Wild roses were already putting forth their leaves in various fissures of the rocks, where earth had been placed for their support, and the margin of the little stream that actually washed the base of the cliff, winding off in a charming sweep through the meadows, a rivulet of less than twenty feet in width, was garnished with willows and alder. Quitting this sylvan spot we will return to the little shrub-adorned area in front of the Hut. This spot the captain called his glacis, while his daughters termed it the lawn. The hour, it will be remembered, was shortly before sunset, and thither nearly all the family had repaired to breathe the freshness of the pure air, and bathe in the genial warmth of a season which is ever so grateful to those who have recently escaped from the rigor of a stern winter. Rude, and sufficiently picturesque, garden-seats were scattered about, and on one of these were seated the captain and his wife; he, with his hair sprinkled with gray, a hale, athletic, healthy man of sixty, and she a fresh-looking, mild-featured, and still handsome matron of forty-eight. In front stood a venerable-looking personage, of small stature, dressed in rusty black, of the cut that denoted the attire of a clergyman, before it was considered aristocratic to wear the outward symbols of belonging to the Church of God. This was the Rev. Jedidiah Woods, a native of

New England, who had long served as a chaplain in the same regiment with the captain, and who, being a bachelor on retired pay, had dwelt with his old messmate for the last eight years, in the double capacity of one who exercised the healing art as well for the soul as for the body. To his other offices he added that of an instructor in various branches of knowledge to the young people. The chaplain, for so he was called by everybody in and around the Hut, was, at the moment of which we are writing, busy in expounding to his friends certain nice distinctions that existed, or which he fancied to exist, between a tom-cod and a chub, the former of which fish he very erroneously conceived he held in his hand at that moment; the Rev. Mr. Woods being a much better angler than naturalist. To his dissertation Mrs. Willoughby listened with great good-nature, endeavoring all the while to feel interested; while her husband kept uttering his "By all means," "Yes," "Certainly," "You're quite right, Woods," his gaze at the same time fastened on Joel Strides and Pliny the elder, who were unharnessing their teams on the flats beneath, having just finished a "land," and deeming it too late to commence another.

Beulah, her pretty face shaded by a large sun-bonnet, was superintending the labors of Jamie Allen, who, finding nothing just then to do as a mason, was acting in the capacity of gardener; his hat was thrown upon the grass, with his white locks bare, and he was delving about some shrubs, with the intention of giving them the benefit of a fresh dressing of manure. Maud, however, without a hat of any sort, her long, luxuriant, silken, golden tresses covering her shoulders, and occasionally veiling her warm, rich cheek, was exercising with a battledore, keeping Little Smash, now increased in size to quite fourteen stone, rather actively employed as an assistant, whenever the exuberance of her own spirits caused her to throw the plaything beyond her reach. In one of the orchards, near by, two men were employed trimming the trees. To these the captain next turned all his attention, just as he had encouraged the chaplain to persevere, by exclaiming,

"Out of all question, my dear sir"—though he was absolutely ignorant that the other had just advanced a downright scientific heresy. At this critical moment a cry from Little Smash, that almost equaled a downfall of crockery in its clamor, drew every eye in her direction.

"What is the matter, Desdemona?" asked the chaplain a little tartly, by no means pleased at having his natural history startled by sounds so inapplicable to the subject. "How often have I told you that the Lord views with displeasure anything so violent and improper as your outcries?"

"Can't help him, dominie — nebber can help him, when he take me sudden. See, masser, dere come Ole Nick!"

There was Nick, sure enough. For the first time in more than two years, the Tuscarora was seen approaching the house, on the long, loping trot that he affected when he wished to seem busy, or honestly earning his money. He was advancing by the only road that was ever travelled by the stranger as he approached the Hut; or, he came up the valley. As the woman spoke, he had just made his appearance over the rocks, in the direction of the mills. At that distance, quite half a mile, he would not have been recognized but for this gait, which was too familiar to all at the Knoll, however, to be mistaken.

"That is Nick, sure enough!" exclaimed the captain. "The fellow comes at the pace of a runner; or as if he were the bearer of some important news!"

"The tricks of Saucy Nick are too well known to deceive any here," observed Mrs. Willoughby, who, surrounded by her husband and children, always felt so happy as to deprecate every appearance of danger.

"These savages will keep that pace for hours at a time," observed the chaplain; "a circumstance that has induced some naturalists to fancy a difference in the species, if not in the genus."

"Is he chub or tom-cod, Woods?" asked the captain, throwing back on the other all he recollected of the previous discourse.

"Nay," observed Mrs. Willoughby, anxiously, "I do

think he may have some intelligence! It is now more than a twelvemonth since we have seen Nick."

"It is more than twice a twelvemonth, my dear; I have not seen the fellow's face since I denied him the keg of rum for his 'discovery' of another beaver pond. He has tried to sell me a new pond every season since the purchase of this."

"Do you think he took serious offense, Hugh, at that refusal?. If so, would it not be better to give him what he asks?"

"I have thought little about it, and care less, my dear. Nick and I know each other pretty well. It is an acquaintance of thirty years' standing, and one that has endured trials by flood and field, and even by the horsewhip. No less than three times have I been obliged to make these salutary applications to Nick's back, with my own hands; though it is now more than ten years since a blow has passed between us."

"Does a savage ever forgive a blow?" asked the chaplain, with a grave air, and a look of surprise.

"I fancy a savage is quite as apt to forgive it as a civilized man, Woods. To you, who have served so long in his Majesty's army, a blow, in the way of punishment, can be no great novelty."

"Certainly not, as respects the soldiers; but I did not know Indians were ever flogged."

"That is because you never happened to be present at the ceremony — but this is Nick, sure enough; and by his trot I begin to think the fellow has some message or news."

"How old is the man, captain? Does an Indian never break down?"

"Nick must be fairly fifty. now. I have known him more than half that period, and he was an experienced, and, to own the truth, a brave and skillful warrior, when we first met. I rate him fifty, every day of it."

By this time the new-comer was so near, that the conversation ceased, all standing gazing at him, as he drew near, and Maud gathering up her hair with maiden bashfulness, though certainly Nick was no stranger. As for Little

Smash, she waddled off to proclaim the news to the younger Pliny, Mari', and Great Smash, all of whom were still in the kitchen of the Hut, flourishing, sleek, and glistening.

Soon after, Nick arrived. He came up the Knoll on his loping trot, never stopping until he was within five or six yards of the captain, when he suddenly halted, folded his arms, and stood in a composed attitude, lest he should betray a womanish desire to tell his story. He did not even pant, but appeared as composed and unmoved as if he had walked the half-mile he had been seen to pass over on a trot.

"Sago — sago," cried the captain, heartily; "you are welcome back, Nick; I am glad to see you still so active."

"Sago," uttered the guttural voice of the Indian, who quietly nodded his head.

"What will you have to refresh you, after such a journey, Nick? Our trees give us good cider now."

"Santa Cruz better," rejoined the sententious Tuscarora.

"Santa Cruz is certainly stronger," answered the captain, laughing, "and, in that sense, you may find it better. You shall have a glass as soon as we go to the house. What news do you bring, that you come in so fast?"

"Glass won't do. Nick bring news worth jug. Squaw give two jug for Nick's news. Is it barg'in?"

"I!" cried Mrs. Willoughby. "What concern can I have with your news! My daughters are both with me, and, Heaven be praised! both are well. What can I care for your news, Nick?"

"Got no pappoose but gal? T'ink you got boy. Officer — great chief — up here, down yonder, over dere."

"Robert! Major Willoughby! What can you have to tell me of my son?"

"Tell all about him for one jug. Jug out yonder; Nick's story out here. One good as t'other."

"You shall have all you ask, Nick." These were not temperance days, when conscience took so firm a stand between the bottle and the lips. "You shall have all you ask, Nick, provided you can really give me good accounts of my noble boy. Speak, then. What have you to say!"

"Say you see him in ten, five minute. Sent Nick before to keep moder from too much cry."

An exclamation from Maud followed; then the ardent girl was seen rushing down the lawn, her hat thrown aside, and her bright, fair hair again flowing in ringlets on her shoulders. She flew rather than ran, in the direction of the mill, where the figure of Robert Willoughby was seen rushing forward to meet her. Suddenly the girl stopped, threw herself on a log, and hid her face. In a few minutes she was locked in her brother's arms. Neither Mrs. Willoughby nor Beulah imitated this impetuous movement on the part of Maud; but the captain, chaplain, and even Jamie Allen, hastened down the road to meet and welcome the young major. Ten minutes later, Bob Willoughby was folded to his mother's heart. Then came Beulah's turn, after which, the news having flown through the household, the young man had to receive the greetings of Mari', both the Smashes, the younger Pliny, and all the dogs. A tumultuous quarter of an hour brought all round again to its proper place, and restored something like order to the Knoll. Still an excitement prevailed the rest of the day; for the sudden arrival of a guest always produced a sensation in that retired settlement. Much more likely, then, was the unexpected appearance of the only son and heir to create one. As everybody bustled and was in motion, the whole family was in the parlor, and Major Willoughby was receiving the grateful refreshment of a delicious cup of tea, before the sun set. The chaplain would have retired out of delicacy, but to this the captain would not listen. He would have everything proceed as if the son were a customary guest, though it might have been seen by the manner in which his mother's affectionate eye was fastened on his handsome face, as well as that in which his sister Beulah, in particular, hung about him, under the pretense of supplying his wants, that the young man was anything but an every-day inmate.

"How the lad has grown!" said the captain, tears of pride starting into his eyes, in spite of a very manful resolution to appear composed and soldier-like.

"I was about to remark that myself, captain," observed the chaplain. "I do think Mr. Robert has got to his full six feet — every inch as tall as you are yourself, my good sir."

"That is he, Woods — and taller, in one sense. He is a major already, at twenty-seven. It is a step I was not able to reach at near twice the age."

"That is owing, my dear sir," answered the son quickly, and with a slight tremor in his voice, "to your not having as kind a father as has fallen to my share — or at least one not as well provided with the means of purchasing."

"Say none at all, Bob, and you can wound no feeling, while you will tell the truth. My father died a lieutenant-colonel when I was a schoolboy. I owed my ensigncy to my uncle Sir Hugh, the father of the present Sir Harry Willoughby; after that I owed each step to hard and long service. Your mother's legacies have helped you along at a faster rate, though I do trust there has been some merit to aid in the preferment."

"Speaking of Sir Harry Willoughby, sir, reminds me of one part of my errand to the Hut," said the major, glancing his eye towards his father, as if to prepare him for some unexpected intelligence.

"What of my cousin?" demanded the captain calmly. "We have not met in thirty years, and are the next thing to strangers to each other. Has he made that silly match of which I heard something when last in York? Has he disinherited his daughter, as he threatened? Use no reserve here; our friend Woods is one of the family."

"Sir Harry Willoughby is not married, sir, but dead."

"Dead?" repeated the captain, setting down his cup, like one who received a sudden shock. "I hope not without having been reconciled to his daughter, and providing for her large family?"

"He died in her arms, and escaped the consequences of his silly intention to marry his own housekeeper. With one material exception, he has left Mrs. Bowater his whole fortune."

The captain sat thoughtful for some time, every one else being silent and attentive. But the mother's feelings prompted her to inquire as to the nature of the exception.

"Why, mother, contrary to all my expectations, and I may say wishes, he has left me twenty-five thousand pounds in the fives. I only hold the money as my father's trustee."

"You do no such thing, Master Bob, I can tell you!" said the captain with emphasis.

The son looked at the father a moment, as if to see whether he was understood, and then he proceeded: —

"I presume you remember, sir," said the major, "that you are the heir to the title?"

"I have not forgot that, Major Willoughby; but what is an empty baronetcy to a happy husband and father like me, here in the wilds of America? Were I still in the army, and a colonel, the thing might be of use. As I am, I would rather have a tolerable road from this place to the Mohawk, than the duchy of Norfolk without the estate."

"Estate there is none certainly," returned the major, in a tone of a little disappointment, "except the twenty-five thousand pounds, unless you include that which you possess where you are — not insignificant, by the way, sir."

"It will do well enough for old Hugh Willoughby, late a captain in his Majesty's 23d Regiment of Foot, but not so well for Sir Hugh. No, no, Bob. Let the baronetcy sleep awhile; it has been used quite enough for the last hundred years or more. Out of this circle there are probably not ten persons in America who know that I have any claims to it."

The major colored, and he played with the spoon of his empty cup, stealing a glance or two around before he answered.

"I beg your pardon, Sir Hugh — my dear father, I mean; but — to own the truth — never anticipating such a decision on your part, I have spoken of the thing to a good many friends. I dare say — if the truth were known — I've called you the baronet, or Sir Hugh, to others at least a dozen times."

"Well, should it be so, the thing will be forgotten. A

parson can be unfrocked, Woods, and a baronet can be unbaroneted, I suppose."

"But Sir William"—so everybody called the well-known Sir William Johnson, in the colony of New York—"but Sir William found it useful, Willoughby, and so I dare say will his son and successor, Sir John," observed the attentive wife and anxious mother, "and if you are not now in the army, Bob is. It will be a good thing for our son one day, and ought not to be lost."

"Ah, I see how it is, Beulah—your mother has no notion to lose the right of being called Lady Willoughby."

"I am sure my mother, sir, wishes to be called nothing that does not become your wife. If you remain Mr. Hugh Willoughby, she will remain Mrs. Hugh Willoughby. But, papa, it might be useful to Bob."

Beulah was a great favorite with the captain, Maud being only his darling. He listened always to whatever the former said, therefore, with indulgence and respect. He often told the chaplain that his daughter Beulah had the true feelings of her sex, possessing a sort of instinct for whatever was right and becoming in woman.

"Well, Bob may have the baronetcy, then," he said, smiling. "Major Sir Robert Willoughby will not sound amiss in a dispatch."

"But Bob cannot have it, father," exclaimed Maud. "No one can have it but you; and it's a pity it should be lost."

"Let him wait, then, until I am out of the way; when he may claim his own."

"Can that be done?" inquired the mother, to whom nothing was without interest that affected her children. "How is it, Mr. Woods?—may a title be dropped and then picked up again?—how is this, Robert?"

"I believe it may, my dear mother; it will always exist, so long as there is an heir, and my father's disrelish for it will not be binding on me."

"Oh! in that case, then, all will come right in the end; though, as your father does not want it, I wish you could have it now."

This was said with the most satisfied air in the world, as if the speaker had no possible interest in the matter herself, and it closed the conversation for that time. It was not easy to keep up an interest in anything that related to the family, where Mrs. Willoughby was concerned, in which heart did not predominate. A baronetcy was a considerable dignity in the colony of New York in the year of our Lord 1775, and it gave its possessor far more importance than it would have done in England. In the whole colony there was but one, though a good many were to be found farther south; and he was known as "Sir John," as in England, Lord Rockingham, or in America at a later day, La Fayette, was known as "The Marquis." Under such circumstances, then, it would have been no trifling sacrifice to an ordinary woman to forego the pleasure of being called "my lady." But the sacrifice cost our matron no pain, no regrets, no thought even. The same attachments which made her happy, away from the world, in the wilderness where she dwelt, supplanted all other feelings, and left her no room or leisure to think of such vanities. When the discourse changed, it was understood that "Sir Hugh" was not to be "Sir Hugh," and that "Sir Robert" must bide his time.

"Where did you fall in with the Tuscarora, Bob?" suddenly asked the captain, as much to bring up another subject as through curiosity. "The fellow had been so long away, I began to think we should never see him again."

"He tells me, sir, he has been on a war-path, somewhere out among the western savages. It seems these Indians fight among themselves, from time to time, and Nick has been trying to keep his hand in. I found him down at Canajoharie, and took him for a guide, though he had the honesty to own he was on the point of coming over here, had I not engaged him."

"I'll answer for it he didn't tell you that until you had paid him for the job."

"Why, to own the truth, he did not, sir. He pretended something about owing money in the village, and got his

pay in advance. I learned his intentions only when we were within a few miles of the Hut."

"I'm glad to find, Bob, that you give the place its proper name. How gloriously Sir Hugh Willoughby, Bart., of The Hut, Tryon County, New York, would sound, Woods! Did Nick boast of the scalps he has taken from the Carthaginians?"

"He lays claim to three, I believe, though I have seen none of his trophies."

"The Roman hero! Yet I have known Nick rather a dangerous warrior. He was out against us in some of my earliest service, and our acquaintance was made by my saving his life from the bayonet of one of my own grenadiers. I thought the fellow remembered the act for some years; but, in the end, I believe I flogged all the gratitude out of him. His motives now are concentrated in the little island of Santa Cruz."

"Here he is, father," said Maud, stretching her light, flexible form out of a window. "Mike and the Indian are seated at the lower spring, with a jug between them, and appear to be in a deep conversation."

"Aye, I remember on their first acquaintance that Mike mistook Saucy Nick for Old Nick. The Indian was indignant for awhile at being mistaken for the Evil Spirit, but the worthies soon found a bond of union between them, and before six months he and the Irishman became sworn friends. It is said whenever two human beings love a common principle, that it never fails to make them firm allies."

"And what was the principle in this case, Captain Willoughby?" inquired the chaplain, with curiosity.

"Santa Cruz. Mike renounced whiskey altogether after he came to America, and took to rum. As for Nick, he was never so vulgar as to find pleasure in the former liquor."

The whole party had gathered to the windows, while the discourse was proceeding, and looking out, each individual saw Mike and his friend in the situation described by Maud. The two amateurs — connoisseurs would not be misapplied, either — had seated themselves at the brink of a spring of delicious water, and removing the corn-cob that Pliny the

younger had felt it to be classical to affix to the nozzle of a quart jug, had, some time before, commenced the delightful recreation of sounding the depth, not of the spring, but of the vessel. As respects the former, Mike, who was a wag in his way, had taken a hint from a practice said to be common in Ireland, called "potato and point," which means to eat the potato and point at the butter; declaring that "rum and p'int" was every bit as entertaining as a "p'int of rum." On this principle, then, with a broad grin on a face that opened from ear to ear whenever he laughed, the county Leitrim-man would gravely point his finger at the water, in a sort of mock-homage, and follow up the movement with such a suck at the nozzle, as, aided by the efforts of Nick, soon analyzed the upper half of the liquor that had entered by that very passage. All this time, conversation did not flag, and, as the parties grew warm, confidence increased, though reason sensibly diminished. As a part of this discourse will have some bearing on what is to follow, it may be in place to relate it here.

"Ye're a jewel, ye be, ould Nick or young Nick!" cried Mike, in an ecstasy of friendship, just after he had completed his first half-pint. "Ye're as wilcome at the Huts as if ye owned thim, and I love ye as I did my own brother, before I left the county Leitrim — paice to his sowl!"

"He dead?" asked Nick, sententiously; for he had lived enough among the pale-faces to have some notions of their theory about the soul.

"That's more than I know; but, living or dead, the man must have a sowl, ye understand, Nicholas. A human cr'ature widout a sowl, is what I call a heretic; and none of the O'Hearns ever came to that."

Nick was tolerably drunk, but by no means so far gone that he had not manners enough to make a grave and somewhat dignified gesture, which was as much as to say he was familiar with the subject.

"All go ole fashion here?" he asked, avoiding every appearance of curiosity, however.

"That does it — that it does, Nicholas. All goes ould enough. The captain begins to get ould; and the missus

is oulder than she used to be; and Joel's wife looks a hundred, though she isn't t'irty; and Joel himself, the spalpeen — he looks" — a gulp at the jug stopped the communication.

"Dirty, too?" added the sententious Tuscarora, who d' \ not comprehend more than half his friend said.

"Aye, dir-r-ty — he's always that. He's a dirthy fe' low, that thinks his Yankee char*a*cter is above all othe things."

Nick's countenance became illuminated with an expression nowise akin to that produced by rum, and he fastened on his companion one of his fiery gazes, which occasionally seemed to penetrate to the centre of the object looked at.

"Why pale-face hate one anoder? Why Irishman don't love Yankee?"

"Och! love the cr'ature, is it? You'd betther ask me to love a to'd" — for so Michael would pronounce the word "toad." "What is there to love about him, but skin and bone! I'd as soon love a skiliten. Yes — an immortal skiliten."

Nick made another gesture, and then he endeavored to reflect, like one who had a grave business in contemplation. The Santa Cruz confused his brain, but the Indian never entirely lost his presence of mind; or never, at least, so long as he could either see or walk.

"Don't like him," rejoined Nick. "Like anybody?"

"To be sure I does: I like the capt'in — och, he's a jontleman; and I likes the missus — she's a lady; and I likes Miss Beuly, who's a swate young woman; and then there's Miss Maud, who's the delight of my eyes. Fegs, but isn't she a cr'ature to relish!"

Mike spoke like a good, honest fellow, as he was at the bottom, with all his heart and soul. The Indian did not seem pleased, but he made no answer.

"You've been in the wars then, Nick?" asked the Irishman, after a short pause.

"Yes; Nick been chief ag'in — take scalps."

"Och! That's a might ugly thrade! If you'd tell 'em that in Irelaud they'd not think it a possibility."

"No like fight in Ireland, ha?"

"I'll not say that — no, I'll not say that; for many's the jollification at which the fighting is the chafe amusement. But we likes thumping on the head — not skinning it."

"That your fashion — my fashion take scalp. You thump — I skin; which is best?"

"Augh! skinnin' is a dreadthful operation; but shillaleh-work comes nately and nat'rally. How many of these said scalps, now, may ye have picked up, Nick, in yer last journey?"

"T'ree — all man and woman — no pappoose. One big enough make two; so call him four."

"Oh! divil burn ye, Nick; but there's a spice of your namesake in ye, afther all. T'ree human cr'atures skinned, and you not satisfied, and so ye'll chait a bit to make 'em four! D'ye never think, now, of yer latther ind? D'ye never confess?"

"T'ink every day of dat. Hope to find more before last day come. Plenty scalp here — ha, Mike?"

This was said a little incautiously, perhaps, but it was said under a strong native impulse. The Irishman, however, was never very logical or clear-headed; and three gills of rum had by no means helped to purify his brain. He heard the word "plenty," knew he was well fed and warmly clad, and just now, that Santa Cruz so much abounded, the term seemed peculiarly applicable.

"It's a plinthiful place it is, is this very manor. There's all sorts of things in it that's wanted. There's food and raiment, and cattle, and grain, and porkers, and praiching — yes, divil burn it, Nick, but there's what goes for praiching, though it's no more like what we calls praiching than ye're like Miss Maud in comeliness; and ye'll own, yourself, Nick, ye're no beauty."

"Got handsome hair," said Nick, surlily. "How she look widout scalp?"

"The likes of her, is it! Who ever saw one of her beauthy without the finest hair that ever was! What do you get for your scalps? — are they of any use when you find 'em?"

"Bring plenty by'm-by. Whole country glad to see him before long — den beavers get pond ag'in."

"How's that — how's that, Indian? Baiver get pounded? There's no pound hereabout, and baivers is not an animal to be shut up like a hog!"

Nick perceived that his friend was past argumentation, and as he himself was approaching the state when the drunkard receives delight from he knows not what, it is unnecessary to relate any more of the dialogue. The jug was finished, each man very honestly drinking his pint, and as naturally submitting to its consequences; and this so much the more because the two were so engrossed with the rum that both forgot to pay that attention to the spring that might have been expected from its proximity.

CHAPTER V.

The soul, my lord, is fashioned like the lyre.
Strike one cord suddenly, and others vibrate.
Your name abruptly mentioned, casual words
Of comment on your deeds, praise from your uncle
News from the armies, talk of your return,
A word let fall touching your youthful passion,
Suffused her cheek, called to her drooping eye
A momentary lustre, made her pulse
Leap headlong, and her bosom palpitate.

HILLHOUSE.

THE approach of night at sea, and in a wilderness, has always something more solemn in it, than on land in the centre of civilization. As the curtain is drawn before his eyes the solitude of the mariner is increased, while even his sleepless vigilance seems in a measure baffled by the manner in which he is cut off from the signs of the hour. Thus, too, in the forest or in an isolated clearing, the mysteries of the woods are deepened, and danger is robbed of its forethought and customary guards. That evening Major Willoughby stood at the window with an arm round the slender waist of Beulah, Maud standing a little aloof; and as the twilight retired, leaving the shadows of evening to thicken on the forest that lay within a few hundred feet of that side of the Hut, and cast a gloom over the whole of the quiet solitude, he felt the force of the feeling just mentioned, in a degree he had never before experienced.

"This is a very retired abode, my sisters," he said thoughtfully. "Do my father and mother never speak of bringing you out more into the world?"

"They take us to New York every winter, now father is in the Assembly," quietly answered Beulah. "We expected to meet you there last season, and were greatly disappointed that you did not come."

"My regiment was sent to the eastward, as you know, and having just received my new rank of major, it would not do to be absent at the moment. Do you ever see any one here besides those who belong to the manor?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Maud eagerly; then she paused, as if sorry she had said anything; continuing, after a little pause, in a much more moderate vein, "I mean occasionally. No doubt the place is very retired."

"Of what character are your visitors? — hunters, trappers, settlers — savages or travellers?"

Maud did not answer; but Beulah, after waiting a moment for her sister to reply, took that office on herself.

"Some of all," she said, "though few certainly of the latter class. The hunters are often here; one or two a month in the mild season; settlers rarely, as you may suppose, since my father will not sell, and there are not many about, I believe; the Indians come more frequently, though I think we have seen less of them during Nick's absence than while he was more with us. Still we have as many as a hundred in a year, perhaps, counting the women. They come in parties, you know, and five or six of these will make that number. As for travellers, they are rare; being generally surveyors, land hunters, or perhaps a proprietor who is looking up his estate. We had two of the last in the fall before we went below."

"That is singular; and yet one might well look for an estate in a wilderness like this. Who were your proprietors?"

"An elderly man and a young one. The first was a sort of partner of the late Sir William's, I believe, who has a grant somewhere near us, for which he was searching. His name was Fonda. The other was one of the Beekmans, who has lately succeeded his father in a property of considerable extent somewhere at no great distance from us, and came to take a look at it. They say he has quite a hundred thousand acres in one body."

"And did he find his land? Tracts of thousands and tens of thousands are sometimes not to be discovered."

"We saw him twice, going and returning, and he was

successful. The last time he was detained by a snow-storm, and stayed with us some days — so long, indeed, that he remained and accompanied us out when we went below. We saw much of him, too, last winter in town."

"Maud, you wrote me nothing of all this! Are visitors of this sort so very common that you do not speak of them in your letters?"

"Did I not? Beulah will scarce pardon me for that. She thinks Mr. Evert Beekman more worthy of a place in a letter than I do, perhaps."

"I think him a very respectable and sensible young man," answered Beulah quietly, though there was a deeper tint on her cheek than common, which it was too dark to see. "I am not certain, however, he need fill much space in the letters of either of your sisters."

"Well, this is something gleaned!" said the major, laughing; "and now, Beulah, if you will only let out a secret of the same sort about Maud, I shall be *au fait* of all the family mysteries."

"All!" repeated Maud, quickly, "would there be nothing to tell of a certain Major Willoughby, brother of mine?"

"Not a syllable. I am as heart-whole as a sound oak, and hope to remain so. At all events, all I love is in this house. To tell you the truth, girls, these are not times for a soldier to think of anything but his duty. The quarrel is getting to be serious between the mother country and her colonies."

"Not so serious, brother," observed Beulah, earnestly, "as to amount to that. Evert Beekman thinks there will be trouble, but he does not appear to fancy it will go as far as any serious violence."

"Evert Beekman! Most of that family are loyal, I believe; how is it with this Evert?"

"I dare say you would call him a rebel," answered Maud, laughing, for now Beulah chose to be silent, leaving her sister to explain. "He is not fiery; but he calls himself an American, with emphasis; and that is saying a good deal, when it means he is not an Englishman. Pray what do you call yourself, Bob?"

"I! Certainly an American in one sense, but an Englishman in another. An American, as my father was a Cumberland-man, and an Englishman as a subject, and as connected with the empire."

"As St. Paul was a Roman. Heigho! Well, I fear I have but one character — or, if I have two, they are an American, and a New York girl. Did I dress in scarlet, as you do, I might feel English too, possibly."

"This is making a trifling misunderstanding too serious," observed Beulah. "Nothing can come of all the big words that have been used, more than big words. I know that is Evert Beekman's opinion."

"I hope you may prove a true prophet," answered the major, once more buried in thought. "This place does seem to be fearfully retired, for a family like ours. I hope my father may be persuaded to pass more of his time in New York. Does he ever speak on the subject, girls, or appear to have any uneasiness?"

"Uneasiness about what? The place is health itself; all sorts of fevers, and agues, and those things being quite unknown. Mamma says the toothache, even, cannot be found in this healthful spot."

"That is lucky — and yet I wish Captain Willoughby — Sir Hugh Willoughby — could be induced to live more in New York. Girls of your time of life ought to be in the way of seeing the world, too."

"In other words, of seeing admirers, Major Bob," said Maud, laughing, and bending forward to steal a glance in her brother's face. "Good night. Sir Hugh wishes us to send you into his library when we can spare you, and my lady has sent us a hint that it is ten o'clock, at which hour it is usual for sober people to retire."

The major kissed both sisters with warm affection — Beulah fancied with a sobered tenderness, and Maud thought kindly — and then they retired to join their mother, while he went to seek his father.

The captain was smoking in the library, as a room of all-head-work was called, in company with the chaplain. The practice of using tobacco in this form had grown to be so

strong in both of these old inmates of garrisons, that they usually passed an hour in the recreation before they went to bed. Nor shall we mislead the reader with any notions of fine-flavored Havana cigars; pipes, with Virginia cut, being the materials employed in the indulgence. A little excellent cognac and water, in which, however, the spring was not as much neglected as in the orgies related in the previous chapter, moistened their lips from time to time, giving a certain zest and comfort to their enjoyments. Just as the door opened to admit the major, he was the subject of discourse, the proud parent and the partial friend finding almost an equal gratification in discussing his fine, manly appearance, good qualities, and future hopes. His presence was untimely, then, in one sense; though he was welcome, and, indeed, expected. The captain pushed a chair to his son, and invited him to take a seat near the table, which held a spare pipe or two, a box of tobacco, a decanter of excellent brandy, a pitcher of pure water — all pleasant companions to the elderly gentlemen then in possession.

"I suppose you are too much of a maccaroni, Bob, to smoke," observed the smiling father. "I detested a pipe at your time of life; or may say, I was afraid of it; the only smoke that was in fashion among our scarlet coats being the smoke of gunpowder. Well, how come on Gage and your neighbors, the Yankees?"

"Why, sir," answered the major, looking behind him, to make sure that the door was shut, "why, sir, to own the truth, my visit here just at this moment, is connected with the present state of that quarrel."

Both the captain and the chaplain drew the pipes from their mouths, holding them suspended in surprise and attention.

"The deuce it is!" exclaimed the former. "I thought I owed this unexpected pleasure to your affectionate desire to let me know I had inherited the empty honors of a baronetcy!"

"That was one motive, sir, but the least. I beg you to remember the awkwardness of my position, as a king's officer in the midst of enemies."

"The devil! I say, parson, this exceeds heresy and schism! Do you call lodging in your father's house, Major Willoughby, being in the midst of enemies? This is rebellion against nature, and is worse than rebellion against the king."

"My dear father, no one feels more secure with you than I do; or even with Mr. Woods, here. But there are others besides you two in this part of the world, and your very settlement may not be safe a week longer; probably would not be, if my presence in it were known."

Both the listeners now fairly laid down their pipes, and the smoke began gradually to dissipate, as it might have been rising from a field of battle. One looked at the other in wonder, and then both looked at the major in curiosity.

"What is the meaning of all this, my son?" asked the captain gravely. "Has anything new occurred to complicate the old causes of quarrel?"

"Blood has at length been drawn, sir; open rebellion has commenced!"

"This is a serious matter, indeed, if it be really so. But do you not exaggerate the consequences of some fresh indiscretion of the soldiery in firing on the people? Remember, in the other affair, even the colonial authorities justified the officers."

"This is a very different matter, sir. Blood has not been drawn in a riot, but in a battle."

"Battle! You amaze me, sir! That is indeed a serious matter, and may lead to most serious consequences!"

"The Lord preserve us from evil times," ejaculated the chaplain, "and lead us, poor, dependent creatures that we are, into the paths of peace and quietness! Without his grace, we are the blind leading the blind."

"Do you mean, Major Willoughby, that armed and disciplined bodies have met in actual conflict?"

"Perhaps not literally so, my dear father; but the minute-men of Massachusetts, and his Majesty's forces have met and fought. This I know full well; for my own regiment was in the field, and, I hope it is unnecessary to add, that its second officer was not absent."

"Of course these minute-men — rabble would be the better word — could not stand before you?" said the captain, compressing his lips, under a strong impulse of military pride.

Major Willoughby colored, and, to own the truth, at that moment he wished the Rev. Mr. Woods, if not literally at the devil, at least safe and sound in another room; anywhere, so it were out of ear-shot of the answer.

"Why, sir," he said, hesitating, not to say stammering, notwithstanding a prodigious effort to seem philosophical and calm, "to own the truth, these minute-fellows are not quite as contemptible as we soldiers would be apt to think. It was a stone wall affair, and dodging work; and so you know, sir, drilled troops wouldn't have the usual chance. They pressed us pretty warmly on the retreat."

"Retreat! Major Willoughby!"

"I called it retreat, sure enough; but it was only a march in again, after having done the business on which we went out. I shall admit, I say, sir, that we were hard pressed, until reinforced."

"Reinforced, my dear Bob! Your regiment, our regiment, could not need a reinforcement against all the Yankees in New England."

The major could not abstain from laughing a little at this exhibition of his father's *esprit de corps;* but native frankness, and love of truth, compelled him to admit the contrary.

"It did, sir, notwithstanding," he answered; "and, not to mince the matter, it needed it confoundedly. Some of our officers who have seen the hardest service of the last war, declare, that taking the march, and the popping work, and the distance, altogether, it was the warmest day they remember. Our loss, too, was by no means insignificant, as I hope you will believe when you know the troops engaged. We report something like three hundred casualties."

The captain did not answer for quite a minute. All this time he sat thoughtful, and even pale; for his mind was teeming with the pregnant consequences of such an outbreak. Then he desired his son to give a succinct but con-

nected history of the whole affair. The major complied, beginning his narrative with an account of the general state of the country, and concluding it, by giving, as far as it was possible for one whose professional pride and political feelings were too deeply involved to be entirely impartial, a reasonably just account of the particular occurrence already mentioned.

The events that led to, and the hot skirmish which it is the practice of the country to call the Battle of Lexington, and the incidents of the day itself, are too familiar to the ordinary reader, to require repetition here. The major explained all the military points very clearly, did full justice to the perseverance and daring of the provincials, as he called his enemies — for. an American himself, he would not term them Americans — and threw in as many explanatory remarks as he could think of, by way of vindicating the "march in again." This he did, too, quite as much out of filial piety, as out of self-love; for to own the truth, the captain's mortification as a soldier was so very evident as to give his son sensible pain.

"The effect of all this," continued the major, when his narrative of the military movements was ended, "has been to raise a tremendous feeling throughout the country, and God knows what is to follow."

"And this you have come hither to tell me, Robert," said the father kindly. "It is well done, and as I would have expected from you. We might have passed the summer here, and not have heard a whisper of so important an event."

"Soon after the affair, or as soon as we got some notion of its effect on the provinces, General Gage sent me privately with dispatches to Governor Tryon. He, Governor Tryon, was aware of your position, and as I had also to communicate the death of Sir Harry Willoughby, he directed me to come up the river privately, have an interview with Sir John if possible, and then push on under a feigned name, and communicate with you. He thinks, now Sir William is dead, that with your estate, and new rank, and local influence, you might be very serviceable in sus

taining the royal cause; for it is not to be concealed that this affair is likely to take the character of an open and wide-spread revolt against the authority of the crown."

"General Tryon does me too much honor," answered the captain coldly. "My estate is a small body of wild land, my influence extends little beyond this beaver meadow, and is confined to my own household, and some fifteen or twenty laborers; and as for the new rank of which you speak, it is not likely the colonists will care much for that, if they disregard the rights of the king. Still you have acted like a son in running the risk you do, Bob, and I pray God you may get back to your regiment in safety."

"This is a cordial to my hopes, sir; for nothing would pain me more than to believe you think it my duty, because I was born in the colonies, to throw up my commission and take side with the rebels."

"I do not conceive that to be your duty, any more than I conceive it to be mine to take sides against them, because I happened to be born in England. It is a weak view of moral obligations that confines them merely to the accidents of birth and birthplace. Such a subsequent state of things may have grown up as to change all our duties, and it is necessary that we discharge them as they are — not as they may have been hitherto, or may be hereafter. Those who clamor so much about mere birthplace, usually have no very clear sense of their higher obligations. Over our birth we can have no control, while we are rigidly responsible for the fulfillment of obligations voluntarily contracted."

"Do you reason thus, captain?" asked the chaplain with strong interest. "Now I confess I feel in this matter, not only very much like a native American, but very much like a native Yankee in the bargain. You know I was born in the Bay, and — the major must excuse me, but it ill becomes my cloth to deceive — I hope the major will pardon me. I — I do hope" —

"Speak out, Mr. Woods," said Robert Willoughby, smiling. "You have nothing to fear from your old friend the major."

"So I thought — so I thought. Well then, I was glad, yes, really rejoiced at heart to hear that my countrymen down east there, had made the king's troops scamper."

"I am not aware that I used any such terms, sir, in connection with the manner in which we marched in, after the duty we went out on was performed," returned the young soldier, a little stiffly. "I suppose it is natural for one Yankee to sympathize with another; but my father, Mr. Woods, is an Old England, and not a New England man, and he may be excused if he feel more for the servants of the crown."

"Certainly, my dear major — certainly, my dear Mr. Robert, my old pupil, and I hope, my friend — all this is true enough, and very natural. I allow Captain Willoughby to wish the best for the king's troops, while I wish the best for my own countrymen."

"This is natural on both sides, out of all question, though it by no means follows that it is right. 'Our country, right or wrong,' is a high-sounding maxim, but it is scarcely the honest man's maxim. Our country, after all, cannot have nearer claims upon us than our parents, for instance; and who can claim a moral right to sustain even his own father in error, injustice, or crime? No, no. I hate your pithy sayings; they commonly mean nothing that is substantially good at bottom."

"But one's country in a time of actual war, sir!" said the major, in a tone of as much remonstrance as habit would allow him to use to his own father.

"Quite true, Bob; but the difficulty here is to know which is one's country. It is a family quarrel at the best, and it will hardly do to talk about foreigners at all. It is the same as if I should treat Maud unkindly or harshly, because she is the child of only a friend, and not my own natural daughter. As God is my judge, Woods, I am unconscious of not loving Maud Meredith, at this moment, as tenderly as I love Beulah Willoughby. There was a period in her childhood when the playful little witch had most of my heart, I am afraid, if the truth were known. It is use and duty then, and not mere birth, that ought to rule our hearts"

The major thought it might very well be that one child should be loved more than another, though he did not understand how there could be a divided allegiance. The chaplain looked at the subject with views still more narrowed, and he took up the cudgels of argument in sober earnest, conceiving this to be as good an opportunity as another for disposing of the matter.

"I am all for birth and blood, and natural ties," he said, "always excepting the peculiar claims of Miss Maud, whose case is *sui generis*, and not to be confounded with any other case. A man can have but one country any more than he can have but one nature; and as he is forced to be true to that nature, so ought he morally to be true to that country. The captain says that it is difficult to determine which is one's country, in a civil war; but I cannot admit the argument. If Massachusetts and England get to blows, Massachusetts is my country; if Suffolk and Worcester counties get into a quarrel, my duty calls me to Worcester, where I was born; and so I should carry out the principle from country to country, county to county town to town, parish to parish, or even household to household."

"This is an extraordinary view of one's duty, indeed, my dear Mr. Woods," cried the major, with a good deal of animation, "and if one half the household quarreled with the other, you would take sides with that in which you happened to find yourself at the moment."

"It is an extraordinary view of one's duty for a parson," observed the captain. "Let us reason backward a little, and ascertain where we shall come out. You put the head of the household out of the question. Has he no claims? Is a father to be altogether overlooked in the struggle between the children? Are his laws to be broken, his rights invaded, or his person to be maltreated, perhaps, and his curse disregarded, because a set of unruly children get by the ears on points connected with their own selfishness?"

"I give up the household," cried the chaplain; "for the Bible settles that, and what the Bible disposes of, is beyond

dispute. 'Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,' are terrible words, and must not be disobeyed. But the decalogue has not another syllable which touches the question. 'Thou shalt not kill,' means murder only — common, vulgar murder — and 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' etc., don't bear on civil war, as I see. 'Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy,' 'Thou shalt not covet the ox nor the ass,' 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;' none of these — not one of them — bears at all on this question."

"What do you think of the words of the Saviour, where He tells us to 'render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's'? Has Cæsar no rights here? Can Massachusetts and my Lord North settle their quarrels in such a manner as to put Cæsar altogether out of view?"

The chaplain looked down a moment, pondered a little, and then he came up to the attack again with renewed ardor.

"Cæsar is out of the question here. If his Majesty will come and take sides with us, we shall be ready to honor and obey him; but if he choose to remain alienated from us, it is his act — not ours."

"This is a new mode of settling allegiance! If Cæsar will do as we wish, he shall still be Cæsar; but if he refuse to do as we wish, then down with Cæsar. I am an old soldier, Woods, and while I feel that this question has two sides to it, my disposition to reverence and honor the king is still strong."

The major appeared delighted, and finding matters going on so favorably, he pleaded fatigue and withdrew, feeling satisfied that if his father fairly got into a warm discussion, taking the loyal side of the question, he would do more to confirm himself in the desired views than could be effected by any other means. By this time the disputants were so warm as scarcely to notice the disappearance of the young man, the argument proceeding.

The subject is too hackneyed, and, indeed, possesses too little interest to induce us to give more than an outline of

what passed. The captain and the chaplain belonged to that class of friends which may be termed argumentative. Their constant discussions were a strong link in the chain of esteem; for they had a tendency to enliven their solitude, and to give a zest to lives that, without them, would have been exceedingly monotonous. Their ordinary subjects were theology and war, the chaplain having some practical knowledge of the last, and the captain a lively disposition to the first. In these discussions the clergyman was good-natured, and the soldier polite, circumstances that tended to render them far more agreeable to the listeners than they might otherwise have proved.

On the present occasion the chaplain rang the changes diligently on the natural feelings, while his friend spoke most of the higher duties. The *ad captandum* part of the argument, oddly enough, fell to the share of the minister of the Church, while the intellectual, discriminating, and really logical portion of the subject was handled by one trained in garrisons and camps, with a truth both of ethics and reason that would have done credit to a drilled casuist. The war of words continued till past midnight, both disputants soon getting back to their pipes, carrying on the conflict amid a smoke that did no dishonor to such a well-contested field. Leaving the captain and his friend thus intently engaged, we will take one or two glimpses into different parts of the house, before we cause all our characters to retire for the night.

About the time the battle in the library was at its height, Mrs. Willoughby was alone in her room, having disposed of all the cares and most of the duties of the day. The mother's heart was filled with a calm delight that it would have been difficult for herself to describe. All she held most dear on earth, her husband, her kind-hearted, faithful, long-loved husband; her noble son, the pride and joy of her heart; Beulah, her own natural born daughter, the mild, tractable, sincere, true-hearted child that so much resembled herself; and Maud, the adopted one, rendered dear by solicitude and tenderness, and now so fondly beloved on her own account, were all with her beneath her own roof, almost

within the circle of her arms. The Hutted Knoll was no longer a solitude. The manor was not a wilderness to her; for where her heart was, there truly was her treasure also. After passing a few minutes in silent but delightful thought, this excellent, guileless woman knelt and poured out her soul in thanksgivings to the Being who had surrounded her lot with so many blessings. Alas! little did she suspect the extent, duration, and direful nature of the evils which at that very moment were pending over her native country, or the pains that her own affectionate heart was to endure! The major had not suffered a whisper of the real nature of his errand to escape him, except to his father and the chaplain; and we will now follow him to his apartment, and pass a minute *tête-à-tête* with the young soldier, ere he too lays his head on his pillow.

A couple of neat rooms were prepared and furnished, that were held sacred to the uses of the heir. They were known to the whole household, black and white, as the "young captain's quarters," and even Maud called them, in her laughing off-handedness, "Bob's Sanctum." Here, then, the major found everything as he left it on his last visit, a twelvemonth before, and some few things that were strangers to him in the bargain. In that day, toilets covered with muslin, more or less worked and ornamented, were a regular appliance of every bedroom of a better class house throughout America. The more modern "Duchesses," "Psychés," "dressing-tables," etc., etc., of our own extravagant and benefit-of-the-act-taking generation, were then unknown, a moderately-sized glass, surrounded by curved, gilded ornaments, hanging against the wall, above the said muslin-covered table, quite as a matter of law, if not of domestic faith.

As soon as the major had set down his candle, he looked about him, as one recognizes old friends, pleased at renewing his acquaintance with so many dear and cherished objects. The very playthings of his childhood were there; and even a beautiful and long-used hoop was embellished with ribbons, by some hand unknown to himself. "Can this be my mother?" thought the young man, approaching

to examine the well-remembered hoop, which he had never found so honored before. "Can my kind, tender-hearted mother, who never will forget that I am no longer a child, can she really have done this? I must laugh at her to-morrow about it, even while I kiss and bless her." Then he turned to the toilet, where stood a basket filled with different articles, which at once he understood were offerings to himself. Never had he visited the Hut without finding such a basket in his room at night. It was a tender proof how truly and well he was remembered in his absence.

"Ah!" thought the major, as he opened a bundle of knit lamb's-wool stockings, "here is my dear mother again, with her thoughts about damp feet and the exposure of service. And a dozen shirts, too, with 'Beulah' pinned on one of them! How the deuce does the dear girl suppose I am to carry away such a stock of linen without even a horse to ease me of a bundle? My kit would be like that of the commander-in-chief, were I to take away all that these dear relatives design for me. What's this? A purse! a handsome silken purse too, with Beulah's name on it. Has Maud nothing here? Why has Maud forgotten me? Ruffles, handkerchiefs, garters — yes, here is a pair of my good mother's own knitting, but nothing of Maud's. Ha! what have we here? As I live, a beautiful silken scarf, netted in a way to make a whole regiment envious. Can this have been bought, or has it been the work of a twelvemonth? No name on it either. Would my father have done this? Perhaps it is one of his old scarfs. If so, it is an old new one; for I do not think it has ever been worn. I must inquire into this in the morning. I wonder there is nothing of Maud's!"

As the major laid aside his presents, he kissed the scarf, and then — I regret to say without saying his prayers — the young man went to bed.

The scene must now be transferred to the room where the sisters — in affection, if not in blood — were about to seek their pillows also. Maud, ever the quickest and most prompt in her movements, was already in her night-clothes, and wrapping a shawl about herself, was seated waiting for

Beulah to finish her nightly devotions. It was not long before the latter rose from her knees, and then our heroine spoke.

"The major must have examined the basket by this time," she cried, her cheek rivaling the tint of a ribbon it leaned against on the back of the chair. "I heard his heavy tramp, tramp, tramp, as he went to his room. How differently these men walk from us girls, Beulah!"

"They do, indeed; and Bob has got to be so large and heavy now, that he quite frightens me sometimes. Do you not think he grows wonderfully like papa?"

"I do not see it. He wears his own hair, and it's a pity he should ever cut it off, it's so handsome and curling. Then he is taller, but lighter — has more color — is so much younger, and every way so different, I wonder you think so. I do not think him in the least like father."

"Well, that is odd, Maud. Both mother and myself were struck with the resemblance this evening, and we were both delighted to see it. Papa is quite handsome, and so, I think, is Bob. Mother says he is not quite so handsome as father was at his age, but so like him it is surprising!"

"Men may be handsome and not alike. Father is certainly one of the handsomest elderly men of my acquaintance — and the major is so-so-ish — but I wonder you can think a man of seven-and-twenty so very like one of sixty-odd. Bob tells me he can play the flute quite readily now, Beulah."

"I dare say; he does everything he undertakes uncommonly well. Mr. Woods said a few days since he had never met with a boy who was quicker at his mathematics."

"Oh! All Mr. Woods's geese are swans. I dare say there have been other boys who were quite as clever. I do not believe in nonpareils, Beulah."

"You surprise me, Maud — you, whom I always supposed such a friend of Bob's! He thinks everything you do, too, so perfect! Now this very evening he was looking at the sketch you have made of the Knoll, and he protested he did not know a regular artist in England even that would have done it better."

Maud stole a glance at her sister, while the latter was speaking from under her cap, and her cheeks now fairly put the ribbon to shame; but her smile was still saucy and willful.

"Oh! nonsense," she said; "Bob's no judge of drawings — he scarce knows a tree from a horse!"

"I'm surprised to hear you say so, Maud," said the generous-minded and affectionate Beulah, who could see no imperfection in Bob; "and that of your brother. When he taught you to draw, you thought him well skilled as an artist."

"Did I? I dare say I'm a capricious creature — but somehow I don't regard Bob just as I used to. He has been away from us so much of late, you know — and the army makes men so formidable — and they are not like us, you know — and, altogether, I think Bob excessively changed."

"Well, I'm glad mamma don't hear this, Maud. She looks upon her son, now he is a major, and twenty-seven, just as she used to look upon him when he was in petticoats; nay, I think she considers us all exactly as so many little children."

"She is a dear, good mother, I know," said Maud, with emphasis, tears starting to her eyes involuntarily, almost impetuously; "whatever she says, does, wishes, hopes, or thinks, is right."

"Oh! I knew you would come-to as soon as there was a question about mother! Well, for my part, I have no such horror of men, as not to feel just as much tenderness for father or brother, as I feel for mamma herself."

"Not for Bob, Beulah. Tenderness for Bob! Why, my dear sister, that is feeling tenderness for a Major of Foot, a very different thing from feeling it for one's mother. As for papa — dear me, he is glorious, and I do so love him."

"You ought to, Maud; for you were, and I am not certain that you are not at this moment, his darling."

It was odd that this was said without the least thought on the part of the speaker, that Maud was not her natural sister — that in fact she was not in the least degree related

to her by blood. But so closely and judiciously had Captain and Mrs. Willoughby managed the affair of their adopted child, that neither they themselves, Beulah, nor the inmates of the family or household, ever thought of her but as of a real daughter of her nominal parents. As for Beulah, her feelings were so simple and sincere, that they were even beyond the ordinary considerations of delicacy, and she took precisely the same liberties with her titular, as she would have done with a natural sister. Maud alone of all in the Hut remembered her birth, and submitted to some of its most obvious consequences. As respects the captain, the idea never crossed her mind that she was adopted by him; as respects her mother, she filled to her in every sense that sacred character; Beulah, too, was a sister in thought and deed; but Bob, he had so changed, had been so many years separated from her; had once actually called her Miss Meredith — somehow, she knew not how herself — it was fully six years since she had begun to remember that he was not her brother.

"As for my father," said Maud, rising with emotion, and speaking with startling emphasis, "I will not say I love him — I worship him."

"Ah! I know that well enough, Maud; and to say the truth, you are a couple of idolaters between you. Mamma says this sometimes; though she owns she is not jealous. But it would pain her excessively to hear that you do not feel towards Bob just as we all feel."

"But ought I? Beulah, I cannot!"

"Ought you! Why not, Maud? Are you in your senses, child?"

"But — you know — I'm sure — you ought to remember" —

"What?" demanded Beulah, really frightened at the other's excessive agitation.

"That I am not his real — true — born sister!"

This was the first time in their lives either had ever alluded to the fact in the other's presence. Beulah turned pale; she trembled all over as if in the ague; then she luckily burst into tears, else she might have fainted.

"Beulah — my sister — my own sister!" said Maud, throwing herself into the arms of the distressed girl.

"Ah! Maud, you are, you shall forever be, my only, only sister."

CHAPTER VI.

Oh! It is great for our country to die, when ranks are contending,
Bright is the wreath on our fame; glory awaits us for aye —
Glory, that never is dim, shining on with light never ending —
Glory, that never shall fade, never, oh! never, away.

PERCIVAL.

NOTWITHSTANDING the startling intelligence that had so unexpectedly reached it, and the warm polemical conflict that had been carried on within its walls, the night passed peacefully over the roof of the Hutted Knoll. At the return of dawn, the two Plinies, both the Smashes, and all the menials were again afoot; and ere long Mike, Saucy Nick, Joel, and the rest, were seen astir in the open fields, or in the margin of the woods. Cattle were fed, cows milked, fires lighted, and everything pursued its course in the order of May. The three wenches, as female negroes were then termed, *ex officio*, in America, opened their throats as was usual at that hour, and were heard singing at their labors in a way nearly to deaden the morning carols of the tenants of the forest. Mari', in particular, would have drowned the roar of Niagara. The captain used to call her his clarion.

In due time the superiors of the household made their appearance. Mrs. Willoughby was the first out of her room, as was ever the case when there was anything to be done. On the present occasion the "fatted calf" was to be killed, not in honor of the return of a prodigal son, however, but in behalf of one who was the pride of her eyes and the joy of her heart. The breakfast that she ordered was just the sort of breakfast that one must visit America to witness. France can set forth a very scientific *déjeuner à la fourchette*, and England has labored and ponderous imitations but for the spontaneous, superabundant, unsophisticated,

natural, all-sufficing, and all-subduing morning's meal, take America, in a better-class house in the country, and you reach the *ne plus ultra* in that sort of thing. Tea, coffee and chocolate, of which the first and last were excellent, and the second respectable; hams, fish, eggs, toast, cakes, rolls, marmalades, etc., etc., etc., were thrown together in noble confusion; frequently occasioning the guest, as Mr. Woods naïvely confessed, an utter confusion of mind as to which he was to attack, when all were inviting and each would be welcome.

Leaving Mrs. Willoughby in deep consultation with Mari' on the subject of this feast, we will next look after the two sweet girls whom we so abruptly deserted in the last chapter. When Maud's glowing cheeks were first visible that morning, signs of tears might have been discovered on them, as the traces of the dew are found on the leaf of the rose; but they completely vanished under the duties of the toilet, and she came forth from her chamber bright and cloudless as the glorious May morning which had returned to cheer the solitude of the manor. Beulah followed, tranquil, bland, and mild as the day itself, the living image of the purity of soul and deep affections of her honest nature.

The sisters went into the breakfast-room, where they had little lady-like offices of their own to discharge, too, in honor of the guest; each employing herself in decorating the table, and in seeing that it wanted nothing in the proprieties. As their pleasing tasks were fulfilled, the discourse did not flag between them. Nothing, however, had been said, that made the smallest allusion to the conversation of the past night. Neither felt any wish to revive that subject; and, as for Maud, bitterly did she regret ever having broached it. At times, her cheeks burned with blushes, as she recalled her words; and yet she scarce knew the reason why. The feeling of Beulah was different. She wondered her sister could ever think she was a Meredith, and not a Willoughby. At times she feared some unfortunate oversight of her own, some careless allusion, or indiscreet act, might have served to remind Maud of the circum

stances of her real birth. Yet there was nothing in the last likely to awaken unpleasant reflections, apart from the circumstance that she was not truly a child of the family into which she had been transplanted. The Merediths were, at least, as honorable a family as the Willoughbys, in the ordinary worldly view of the matter; nor was Maud by any means a dependent in the way of money. Five thousand pounds, in the English funds, had been settled on her by the marriage articles of her parents; and twenty years of careful husbandry, during which every shilling had been scrupulously devoted to accumulation, had quite doubled the original amount. So far from being penniless, therefore, Maud's fortune was often alluded to by the captain, in a jocular way, as if purposely to remind her that she had the means of independence, and duties connected with it. It is true, Maud herself had no suspicion that she had been educated altogether by her "father," and that her own money had not been used for this purpose. To own the truth, she thought little about it; knew little about it, beyond the fact that she had a fortune of her own, into the possession of which she must step, when she attained her majority. How she came by it, even, was a question she never asked; though there were moments when tender regrets and affectionate melancholy would come over her heart, as she thought of her natural parents, and of their early deaths. Still Maud implicitly reposed on the captain and Mrs. Willoughby, as on a father and mother; and it was not owing to them, or anything connected with their love, treatment, words, or thoughts, that she was reminded that they were not so in very fact, as well as in tenderness.

"Bob will think you made these plum sweetmeats, Beulah," said Maud, with a saucy smile, as she placed a glass plate on the table; "he never thinks I can make anything of this sort; and, as he is so fond of plums, he will be certain to taste them; then you will come in for the praise!"

"You appear to think that praise he must. Perhaps he may not fancy them good."

"If I thought so, I would take them away this instant," cried Maud, standing in the attitude of one in doubt. "Bob does not think much of such things in girls, for he says ladies need not be cooks; and yet when one does make a thing of this sort, one would certainly like to have it well made."

"Set your heart at ease, Maud; the plums are delicious — much the best we ever had, and we are rather famous for them, you know. I'll answer for it, Bob will pronounce them the best he has ever tasted."

"And if he shouldn't, why should I care — that is, not very much — about it. You know they are the first I ever made, and one may be permitted to fail on a first effort. Besides, a man may go to England, and see fine sights, and live in great houses, and all that, and not understand when he has good plum sweetmeats before him, and when bad. I dare say there are many colonels in the army who are ignorant on this point."

Beulah laughed, and admitted the truth of the remark; though, in her secret mind, she had almost persuaded herself that Bob knew everything.

"Do you not think our brother improved in appearance, Maud?" she asked, after a short pause. "The visit to England has done him that service, at least."

"I don't see it, Beulah — I see no change. To me Bob is just the same to-day, that he has ever been; that is, ever since he grew to be a man — with boys, of course, it is different. Ever since he was made a captain, I mean."

As Major Willoughby had reached that rank the day he was one-and-twenty, the reader can understand the precise date when Maud began to take her present views of his appearance and character.

"I am surprised to hear you say so, Maud! Papa says he is better 'set up,' as he calls it, by his English drill, and that he looks altogether more like a soldier than he did."

"Bob has always had a martial look!" cried Maud, quickly; "he got that in garrison, when a boy."

"If so, I hope he may never lose it!" said the subject

of the remark himself, who had entered the room unperceived, and overheard this speech. "Being a soldier, one would wish to look like what he is, my little critic."

The kiss that followed, and that given to Beulah, were no more than the usual morning salutations of a brother to his sisters, slight touches of rosy cheeks; and yet Maud blushed; for, as she said to herself, she had been taken by surprise.

"They say listeners never hear good of themselves," answered Maud, with a vivacity that betokened confusion. "Had you come a minute sooner, Master Bob, it might have been an advantage."

"Oh! Beulah's remarks I do not fear; so long as I get off unscathed from yours, Miss Maud, I shall think myself a lucky fellow. But what has brought me and my training into discussion this morning?"

"It is natural for sisters to speak about their brother after so long"—

"Tell him nothing about it, Beulah," interrupted Maud. "Let him listen, and eavesdrop, and find out as he may, if he would learn our secrets. There, Major Willoughby, I hope that is a promise of a breakfast, which will satisfy even your military appetite?"

"It looks well, indeed, Maud,—and there, I perceive, are some of Beulah's excellent plums, of which I am so fond; I know they were made especially for me, and I must kiss you, sister, for this proof of remembrance."

Beulah, to whose simple mind it seemed injustice to appropriate credit that belonged to another, was about to tell the truth; but an imploring gesture from her sister induced her to smile, and receive the salute in silence.

"Has any one seen Captain Willoughby and Parson Woods this morning?" inquired the major. "I left them desperately engaged in discussion, and I really feel some apprehension as to the remains left on the field of battle."

"Here they both come," cried Maud, glad to find the discourse taking so complete a change; "and there is mamma, followed by Pliny, to tell Beulah to take her station at the coffee, while I go to the chocolate, leaving

the tea to the only hand that can make it so that my father will drink it."

The parties mentioned entered the room, in the order named; the usual salutations followed, and all took their seats at table. Captain Willoughby was silent and thoughtful at first, leaving his son to rattle on, in a way that betokened care, in his view of the matter, quite as much as it betokened light-heartedness in those of his mother and sisters. The chaplain was rather more communicative than his friend; but he, too, seemed restless, and desirous of arriving at some point that was not likely to come uppermost, in such a family party. At length, the impulses of Mr. Woods got the better of his discretion even, and he could conceal his thoughts no longer.

"Captain Willoughby," he said, in a sort of apologetic, and yet simple and natural manner, "I have done little since we parted, seven hours since, but think of the matter under discussion."

"If you have, my dear Woods, there has been a strong sympathy between us; I have scarcely slept. I may say I have thought of nothing else, myself, and am glad you have broached the subject again."

"I was about to say, my worthy sir, that reflection, and my pillow, and your sound and admirable arguments, have produced an entire change in my sentiments. I think, now, altogether with you."

"The devil you do, Woods!" cried the captain, looking up from his bit of dry toast, in astonishment. "Why, my dear fellow — this is odd — excessively odd, if the truth must be said. To own the real state of the case, chaplain, you have won me over, and I was just about to make proper acknowledgments of your victory!"

It need scarcely be added that the rest of the company were not a little amazed at these cross-concessions, while Maud was exceedingly amused. As for Mrs. Willoughby, nothing laughable ever occurred in connection with her husband; and then she would as soon think of assailing the Church itself, as to ridicule one of its ministers. Beulah could see nothing but what was right in her father, at least

and as for the major, he felt too much concerned at this unexpected admission of his father's to perceive anything but the error.

"Have you not overlooked the injunction of Scripture, my excellent friend?" rejoined the chaplain. "Have you left to the rights of Cæsar all their weight and authority? 'The king's name is a tower of strength.'"

'Have not you, Woods, forgotten the superior claims of reason and right over those of accident and birth — that man is to be considered as a reasoning being to be governed by principles and ever-varying facts, and not a mere animal left to the control of an instinct that perishes with its usefulness?"

"What can they mean, mother?" whispered Maud, scarce able to repress the laughter that came so easily to one with a keen sense of the ludicrous.

"They have been arguing about the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, I believe, my dear, and over-persuaded each other, that's all. It is odd, Robert, that Mr. Woods should convert your father."

"No, my dearest mother, it is something even more serious than that." By this time the disputants, who sat opposite each other, were fairly launched into the discussion again, and heeded nothing that passed. "No, dearest mother, it is far worse than even that. Pliny, tell my man to brush the hunting-jacket — and see he has his breakfast in good style; he is a grumbling rascal, and will give the house a bad character, else; you need not come back until we ring for you; yes, mother, yes, dearest girls, this is a far more serious matter than you suppose, though it ought not to be mentioned idly among the people. God knows how they may take it — and bad news flies swift enough of itself."

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed Mrs. Willoughby; "what can you mean, my son?"

"I mean, mother, that civil war has actually commenced in the colonies, and that the people of your blood and race are in open arms against the people of my father's native country — in a word, against me."

"How can that be, Robert? Who would dare to strike a blow against the king?"

"When men get excited, and their passions are once inflamed, they will do much, my mother, that they might not dream of else."

"This must be a mistake! Some evil-disposed person has told you this, Robert, knowing your attachment to the crown."

"I wish it were so, dear madam; but my own eyes have seen — I may say my own flesh has felt — the contrary."

The major then related what had happened, letting his auditors into the secret of the true state of the country. It is scarcely necessary to allude to the degree of consternation and pain with which he was heard, or to the grief which succeeded.

"You spoke of yourself, dear Bob," said Maud naturally, and with strong feeling; "you were not hurt in this cruel, cruel battle?"

"I ought not to have mentioned it, although I did certainly receive a smart contusion — nothing more, I assure you — here in the shoulder, and it now scarcely inconveniences me."

By this time all were listening, curiosity and interest having silenced even the disputants, especially as this was the first they had heard of the major's casualty. Then neither felt the zeal which had warmed him in the previous contest, but was better disposed to turn aside from its pursuit.

"I hope it did not send you to the rear, Bob?" anxiously inquired the father.

"I was in the rear, sir, when I got the hurt," answered the major, laughing. "The rear is the post of honor on a retreat, you know, my dear father; and I believe our march scarce deserves another name."

"That is hard, too, on king's troops! What sort of fellows had you to oppose, my son?"

"A rather intrusive set, sir. Their object was to persuade us to go into Boston as fast as possible; and it was a little difficult at times not to listen to their argumenta.

If my Lord Percy had not come out with a strong party and two pieces of artillery, we might not have stood it much longer! Our men were fagged like hunted deer, and the day proved oppressively hot."

"Artillery, too!" exclaimed the captain; his military pride reviving a little, to unsettle his last convictions of duty. "Did you open your columns and charge your enemies in line?"

"It would have been charging air. No sooner did we halt, than our foes dispersed; or no sooner did we renew the march, than every line of wall along our route became a line of hostile muskets. I trust you will do us justice, sir — you know the regiments, and can scarce think they misbehaved."

"British troops seldom do that; although I have known it happen. No men, however, are usually more steady, and then these provincials are formidable as skirmishers. In that character I know them, too. What has been the effect of all this on the country, Bob? You told us something of it last night; complete the history."

"The provinces are in a tumult. As for New England, a flame of fire could scarce be more devastating; though I think this colony is less excited. Still here, men are arming in thousands."

"Dear me — dear me!" ejaculated the peacefully-inclined chaplain, "that human beings can thus be inclined to self-destruction!"

"Is Tryon active? What do the royal authorities all this time?"

"Of course they neglect nothing feasible; but they must principally rely on the loyalty and influence of the gentry, until succor can arrive from Europe. If that fail them, their difficulties will be much increased."

Captain Willoughby understood his son; he glanced towards his unconscious wife, as if to see how far she felt with him.

"Our own families are divided, of course, much as they have been in the previous discussions," he added. "The De Lanceys, Van Cortlandts, Philipses, Bayards, and most

of that town connection, with a large portion of the Long Island families, I should think, are with the crown; while the Livingstons, Morrises, Schuylers, Rensselaers, and their friends, go with the colony. Is not this the manner in which they are divided?"

"With some limitations, sir. All the De Lanceys, with most of their strong connections and influence, are with us — with the king I mean — while all the Livingstons and Morrises are against us. The other families are divided — as with the Cortlandts, Schuylers, and Rensselaers. It is fortunate for the Patroon that he is a boy."

"Why so, Bob?" asked the captain, looking inquiringly up at his son.

"Simply, sir, that his great estate may not be confiscated. So many of his near connections are against us that he could hardly escape the contamination, and the consequences would be inevitable."

"Do you consider that so certain, sir? As there are two sides to the question, may there not be two results to the war?"

"I think not, sir. England is no power to be defied by colonies insignificant as these."

"This is well enough for a king's officer, Major Willoughby; but all large bodies of men are formidable when they are right; and nations — these colonies are a nation in extent and number — are not so easily put down, when the spirit of liberty is up and doing among them."

The major listened to his father with pain and wonder. The captain spoke earnestly, and there was a flush about his fine countenance that gave it sternness and authority. Unused to debate with his father, especially when the latter was in such a mood, the son remained silent, though his mother, who was thoroughly loyal in her heart — meaning loyal as applied to a sovereign — and who had the utmost confidence in her husband's tenderness and consideration for herself, was not so scrupulous.

"Why, Willoughby," she cried, "you really incline to rebellion! I, even I, who was born in the colonies, think them very wrong to resist their anointed king and sovereign prince."

"Ah, Wilhelmina," answered the captain, more mildly, "you have a true colonist's admiration of home. But I was old enough when I left England to appreciate what I saw and knew, and cannot feel all this provincial admiration."

"But surely, my dear captain, England is a very great country," interrupted the chaplain, "a prodigious country; one that can claim all our respect and love. Look at the Church, now, the purified continuation of the ancient visible authority of Christ on earth! It is the consideration of this Church that has subdued my natural love of birthplace, and altered my sentiments."

"All very true, and all very well in your mouth, chaplain; yet even the visible Church may err. This doctrine of divine right would have kept the Stuarts on the throne, and it is not even English doctrine, much less then need it be American. I am no Cromwellian, no republican, that wishes to oppose the throne, in order to destroy it. A good king is a good thing, and a prodigious blessing to a country; still, a people needs look to its political privileges if it wish to preserve them. You and I will discuss this matter another time, parson. There will be plenty of opportunities," he added, rising, and smiling good-humoredly; "I must now call my people together, and let them know this news. It is not fair to conceal a civil war."

"My dear sir!" exclaimed the major, in concern, "are you not wrong? — precipitate, I mean. Is it not better to preserve the secret to give yourself time for reflection, to await events? I can discover no necessity for this haste. Should you see things differently hereafter, an incautious word uttered at this moment might bring much motive for regret."

"I have thought of all this, Bob, during the night — for hardly did I close my eyes — and you cannot change my purpose. It is honest to let my people know how matters stand; and so far from being hazardous, as you seem to think, I consider it wise. God knows what time will bring forth; but in every or any event, fair-dealing can scarcely injure him who practices it. I have already sent directions

to have the whole settlement collected on the lawn, at the ringing of the bell, and I expect every moment we shall hear the summons."

Against this decision there was no appeal. Mild and indulgent as the captain habitually was, his authority was not to be disputed when he chose to exercise it. Some doubts arose, and the father participated in them, for a moment, as to what might be the effect on the major's fortunes; for, should a very patriotic spirit rise among the men, two thirds of whom were native Americans, and what was more, from the eastern colonies, he might be detained, or at least betrayed on his return, and delivered into the hands of the revolted authorities. This was a very serious consideration, and it detained the captain in the house some time after the people were assembled, debating the chances in the bosom of his own family.

"We exaggerate the danger," the captain at length exclaimed. "Most of these men have been with me for years, and I know not one among them who I think would wish to injure me, or even you, my son, in this way. There is far more danger in attempting to deceive them than in making them confidants. I will go out and tell the truth, then we shall at least have the security of self-approbation. If you escape the danger of being sold by Nick, my son, I think you have little to fear from any other."

"By Nick!" repeated half a dozen voices, in surprise. "Surely, father — surely, Willoughby — surely, my dear captain, you cannot suspect as old and tried a follower as the Tuscarora!"

"Aye, he is an old follower, certainly, and he has been punished often enough, if he has not been tried. I have never suffered my distrust of that fellow to go to sleep — it is unsafe with an Indian, unless you have a strong hold on his gratitude."

"But, Willoughby, he it was who found this manor for us," rejoined the wife. "Without him we should never have been the owners of this lovely place, this beaver-dam, and all else that we so much enjoy."

"True, my dear; and without good golden guineas we should not have had Nick."

"But, sir, I pay as liberally as he can wish," observed the major. "If bribes will buy him, mine are as good as another's."

"We shall see; under actual circumstances I think we shall be in every respect safer, by keeping nothing back, but by telling all to the people."

The captain now put on his hat, and issued through the undefended gateway, followed by every individual of his family. As the summons had been general, when the Willoughbys and the chaplain appeared on the lawn, every living soul of that isolated settlement, even to infants in the arms, was collected there. The captain commanded the profound respect of all his dependents, though a few among them did not love him. The fault was not his, however, but was inherent rather in the untoward characters of the disaffected themselves. His habits of authority were unsuited to their habits of a presuming equality, perhaps; and it is impossible for the comparatively powerful and affluent to escape the envy and repinings of men, who, unable to draw the real distinctions that separate the gentleman from the low-minded and groveling, impute their advantages to accidents and money. But even the few who permitted this malign and corrupting tendency to influence their feelings, could not deny that their master was just and benevolent, though he did not always exhibit this justice and benevolence precisely in the way best calculated to soothe their own craving self-love, and exaggerated notions of assumed natural claims. In a word, Captain Willoughby, in the eyes of a few unquiet and bloated imaginations among his people, was obnoxious to the imputation of pride; and this because he saw and felt the consequences of education, habits, manners, opinions, and sentiments that were hidden from those who not only had no perception of their existence, but who had no knowledge whatever of the qualities that brought them into being. Pope's familiar line of "What can we reason but from what we know?" is peculiarly applicable to persons of this class; who are ever for dragging all things down to standards created by their own ignorance; and who, slaves of the basest and

meanest passions, reason as if they were possessors of all the knowledge, sensibilities, and refinements of their own country and times. Of this class of men comes the ordinary demagogue, a wretch equally incapable of setting an example of any of the higher qualities in his own person or practice, and of appreciating it when exhibited by others. Such men abound under all systems where human liberty is highly privileged, being the moral fungi of freedom, as the rankest weeds are known to be the troublesome and baneful productions of the richest soils.

It was no unusual thing for the people of the Hutted Knoll to be collected in the manner we have described. We are writing of a period that the present enlightened generation is apt to confound with the darker ages of American knowledge, in much that relates to social usages at least, though it escaped the long-buried wisdom of the Mormon Bible, and Miller's interpretations of the prophecies. In that day, men were not so silly as to attempt to appear always wise, but some of the fêtes and festivals of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were still tolerated among us; the all-absorbing and all-swallowing jubilee of "Independence Day" not having yet overshadowed everything else in the shape of a holiday. Now, Captain Willoughby had brought with him to the colonies the love of festivals that is so much more prevalent in the Old World than in the new and it was by no means an uncommon thing for him to call his people together, to make merry on a birthday, or the anniversary of some battle in which he had been one of the victors. When he appeared on the lawn, on the present occasion, therefore, it was expected he was about to meet them with some such announcement.

The inhabitants of the manor, or the estate of the Hutted Knoll, might be divided into three great physical, and we might add moral, categories, or races; namely, the Anglo-Saxon, the Dutch, both high and low, and the African. The first was the most numerous, including the families of the millers, most of the mechanics, and that of Joel Strides, the land-overseer; the second was composed chiefly of laborers; and the last were exclusively household ser

vants, with the exception of one of the Plinies, who was a ploughman, though permitted to live with his kinsfolk in the Hut. These divisions, Maud, in one of her merry humors, had nicknamed the three tribes; while her father, to make the enumeration complete, had classed the sergeant, Mike, and Jamie Allen, as supernumeraries.

The three tribes, and the three supernumeraries, then, were all collected on the lawn, as the captain and his family approached. By a sort of secret instinct, too, they had divided themselves into knots, the Dutch keeping a little aloof from the Yankees; and the blacks, almost as a matter of religion, standing a short distance in the rear, as became people of their color, and slaves. Mike and Jamie, however, had got a sort of neutral position between the two great divisions of the whites, as if equally indifferent to their dissensions or antipathies. In this manner all parties stood, impatiently awaiting an announcement that had been so long delayed. The captain advanced to the front, and removing his hat, a ceremony he always observed on similar occasions, and which had the effect to make his listeners imitate his own courtesy, he addressed the crowd.

"When people live together in a wilderness like this," commenced the captain, "there ought to be no secrets between them, my friends, in matters that touch the common interests. We are like men on a remote island; a sort of colony of our own; and we must act fairly and frankly by each other. In this spirit, then, I am now about to lay before you all that I know myself, concerning an affair of the last importance to the colonies, and to the empire." Here Joel pricked up his ears, and cast a knowing glance at "the miller," a countryman and early neighbor of his own, who had charge of the grinding for the settlement, and who went by that appellation *par excellence*. "You all know," continued the captain, "that there have been serious difficulties between the colonies and parliament, now, for more than ten years; difficulties that have been, once or twice, partially settled, but which have as often broken out, in some new shape, as soon as an old quarrel was adjusted."

Here the captain paused a moment; and Joel, who was the usual spokesman of "the people," took an occasion to put a question.

"The captain means, I s'pose," he said, in a sly, half-honest, half-jesuitical manner, "the right of parliament to tax us Americans, without our own consent, or our having any members in their legislatoore?"

"I mean what you say. The tax on tea, the shutting the port of Boston, and other steps, have brought larger bodies of the king's troops among us than have been usual. Boston, as you probably know, has had a strong garrison, now, for some months. About six weeks since, the commander-in-chief sent a detachment out as far as Concord, Massachusetts, to destroy certain stores. This detachment had a meeting with the minute-men, and blood was drawn. A running fight ensued, in which several hundreds have been killed and wounded; and I think I know both sides sufficiently well, to predict that a long and bloody civil war is begun. These are facts you should know, and accordingly I tell them to you."

This simple but explicit account was received very differently by the different listeners. Joel Strides leaned forward, with intense interest, so as not to lose a syllable. Most of the New Englanders, or Yankees, paid great attention, and exchanged meaning glances with each other, when the captain had got through. As for Mike, he grasped a shillelah that he habitually carried when not at work, looking round as if waiting for orders from the captain, on whom to begin. Jamie was thoughtful and grave, and, once or twice, as the captain proceeded, he scratched his head in doubt. The Dutch seemed curious, but bewildered, gaping at each other like men who might make up their minds, if you would give them time, but who certainly had not yet. As for the blacks, their eyes began to open like saucers, when they heard of the quarrel; when it got to the blows, their mouths were all grinning with the delight of a thing so exciting. At the mention of the number of the dead, however, something like awe passed over them, and changed their countenances to dismay. Nick alone was indifferent.

By the cold apathy of his manner, the captain saw at once that the battle of Lexington had not been a secret to the Tuscarora, when he commenced his own account. As the captain always encouraged a proper familiarity in his dependents, he now told them he was ready to answer any questions they might think expedient to put to him, in gratification of their natural curiosity.

"I s'pose this news comes by the major?" asked Joel.

"You may well suppose that, Strides. My son is here, and we have no other means of getting it."

"Will your honor be wishful that we shoulther our firearms, and go out and fight one of them sides or t'other?" demanded Mike.

"I wish nothing of the sort, O'Hearn. It will be time enough for us to take a decided part when we get better ideas of what is really going on."

"Doesn't the captain then think matters have got far enough towards a head, for the Americans to make up their minds conclusively, as it might be?" put in Joel, in his very worst manner.

"I think it will be wiser for us all to remain where we are, and as we are. Civil war is a serious matter, Strides, and no man should rush blindly into its dangers and difficulties."

Joel looked at the miller, and the miller looked at Joel. Neither said anything, however, at the time. Jamie Allen had been out in the "forty-five," when thirty years younger than he was that day; and though he had his predilections and antipathies, circumstances had taught him prudence.

"Will the pairliament, think ye, no be bidding the soldiery to wark their will on the puir unairmed folk, up and down the country, and they not provided with the means to resist them?"

"Och, Jamie!" interrupted Mike, who did not appear to deem it necessary to treat this matter with even decent respect, "where will be yer valor and stomach, to ask sich a question as that! A man is always reathy, when he has his ar-r-ms and legs free to act accorthing to natur'. What would a rigiment of throoos do agin the likes of sich a place

as this? I'm sure it's tin years I've been in it, and I've niver been able to find my way out of it. Set a souldier to rowing on the lake forenent the rising sun, with orders to get to the other ind, and a pretty job he'd make of marching on that same! I knows it, for I've thried it, and it is not a new-beginner that will make much of sich oars; barring he knows nothin' about them."

This was not very intelligible to anybody but Joel, and he had ceased to laugh at Mike's voyage, now, some six or seven years; divers other disasters, all having their origin in a similar confusion of ideas, having in the interval supplanted that calamity, as it might be, *seriatim*. Still it was an indication that Mike might be set down as a belligerent, who was disposed to follow his leader into the battle, without troubling him with many questions concerning the merits of the quarrel. Nevertheless, the county Leitrim-man acknowledged particular principles, all of which had a certain influence on his conduct, whenever he could get at them, to render them available. First and foremost, he cordially disliked a Yankee; and he hated an Englishman, both as an oppressor and a heretic; yet he loved his master and all that belonged to him. These were contradictory feelings, certainly; but Mike was all contradiction, both in theory and in practice.

The Anglo-Saxon tribe now professed a willingness to retire, promising to think of the matter, a course against which Mike loudly protested, declaring he never knew any good come of thinking, when matters had got as far as blows. Jamie, too, went off scratching his head, and he was seen to make many pauses, that day, between the shovelfuls of earth he from time to time threw around his plants, as if pondering on what he had heard. As for the Dutch, their hour had not come. No one expected them to decide the day they first heard of argument.

The negroes got together, and began to dwell on the marvels of a battle in which so many Christians had been put to death. Little Smash placed the slain at a few thousands; but Great Smash, as better became her loftier appellation and higher spirit, affirmed that the captain had stated

hundreds of thousands; a loss, with less than which, as she contended, no great battle could possibly be fought.

When the captain was housed, Sergeant Joyce demanded an audience; the object of which was simply to ask for orders, without the least reference to principles.

CHAPTER VII.

We are all here!
Father, mother,
Sister, brother,
All who hold each other dear.
Each chair is filled — we're all at home;
To-night let no cold stranger come:
It is not often thus around
Our old familiar hearth we're found:
Bless, then, the meeting and the spot;
For once be every care forgot;
Let gentle Peace assert her power,
And kind Affection rule the hour;
We're all — all here.

SPRAGUE.

ALTHOUGH most of the people retired to their dwellings, or their labors, as soon as the captain dismissed them, a few remained to receive his further orders. Among these last were Joel, the carpenter, and the blacksmith. These men now joined the chief of the settlement and his son, who had lingered near the gateway, in conversation concerning the alterations that the present state of things might render necessary, in and about the Hut.

"Joel," observed the captain, when the three men were near enough to hear his orders, "this great change in the times will render some changes in our means of defense prudent, if not necessary."

"Does the captain s'pose the people of the colony will attack us?" asked the wily overseer, with emphasis.

"Perhaps not the people of the colony, Mr. Strides, for we have not yet declared ourselves their enemies; but there are other foes, who are more to be apprehended than the people of the colony."

"I should think the king's troops not likely to trouble themselves to ventur' here — the road might prove easier to come than to return. Besides, our plunder would scarce pay for such a march."

"Perhaps not — but there never has yet been a war in these colonies that some of the savage tribes were not engaged in it, before the whites had fairly got themselves into line."

"Do you really think, sir, there can be much serious danger of that!" exclaimed the major, in surprise.

"Beyond a question, my son. The scalping-knife will be at work in six months, if it be not busy already, should one half of your reports and rumors turn out to be true. Such is American history."

"I rather think, sir, your apprehensions for my mother and sisters may mislead you. I do not believe the American authorities will ever allow themselves to be driven into a measure so perfectly horrible and unjustifiable; and were the English ministry sufficiently cruel or unprincipled to adopt the policy, the honest indignation of so humane a people would be certain to drive them from power."

As the major ceased speaking, he turned and caught the expression of Joel's countenance, and was struck with the look of intense interest with which the overseer watched his own warm and sincere manner.

"Humanity is a very pretty stalking-horse for political orations, Bob," quietly returned the father; "but it will scarcely count for much with an old campaigner. God send you may come out of this war with the same ingenuous and natural feelings as you go into it."

"The major will scarce dread the savages, should he be on the side of his nat'ral friends!" remarked Joel; "and if what he says about the humanity of the king's advisers be true, he will be safe from them."

"The major will be on the side to which duty calls him, Mr. Strides, if it may be agreeable to your views of the matter," answered the young man, with a little more hauteur than the occasion required.

The father felt uneasy, and he regretted that his son had been so indiscreet; though he saw no remedy but by drawing the attention of the men to the matter before them.

"Neither the real wishes of the people of America, nor of the people of England, will avail much in carrying on

this war," he said. "Its conduct will fall into the hands of those who will look more to the ends than to the means; and success will be found a sufficient apology for any wrong. This has been the history of all the wars of my time, and it is likely to prove the history of this. I fear it will make little difference to us on which side we may be in feeling; there will be savages to guard against in either case. This gate must be hung, one of the first things, Joel; and I have serious thoughts of placing palisades around the Knoll. The Hut, well palisaded, would make a work that could not be easily carried without artillery."

Joel seemed struck with the idea, though it did not appear that it was favorably. He stood studying the house and the massive gates for a minute or two, ere he delivered his sentiments on the subject. When he did speak, it was a good deal more in doubt than in approbation.

"It's all very true, captain," he said; "the house would seem to be a good deal more safe like, if the gates were up; but a body don't know; sometimes gates be a security, and sometimes they isn't. It all depends on which side the danger comes. Still, as these are made, and finished all to hanging, it's 'most a pity, too, they shouldn't be used, if a body could find time."

"The time must be found, and the gates be hung," interrupted the captain, too much accustomed to Joel's doubting, sort-o'-concluding manner, to be always patient under the infliction. "Not only the gates, but the palisades must be got out, holes dug, and the circumvallation completed."

"It must be as the captain says, of course, he being master here. But time's precious in May. There's half our plantin' to be done yet, and some of the ground hasn't got the last ploughin'. Harvest won't come without seed-time, for no man, let him be great or let him be small — and it does seem to me a sort o' wastin' of the Lord's blessin's, to be hangin' gates, and diggin' holes for that — the thing the captain mentioned — when there's no visible danger in sight to recommend the measure to prudence, as it might be."

"That may be your opinion, Mr. Strides, but it is not mine. I intend to guard against a visible danger that is out

of sight, and I will thank you to have these gates hung, this very day."

"This very day! The captain's a mind to be musical about the matter! Every hand in the settlement couldn't get them gates in their places in less than a week."

"It appears to me, Strides, you are 'playing on the music,' as you call it, yourself, now?"

"No, indeed, captain; them gates will have to be hung on the mechanic principle; and it will take at least two or three days for the carpenter and blacksmith to get up the works that's to do it. Then the hanging itself, I should think, would stand us in hand a day for each side. As for the circumvalley, what between the cuttin', and haulin', and diggin', and settin', that would occupy all hands until after first hoein'. That is, hoein' would come afore the plantin'."

"It does not appear to me, Bob, such a heavy job as Joel represents! The gates are heavy, certainly, and may take us a day or two; but as for stockading — I've seen barracks stockaded in, in a week, if I remember right. You know something of this — what is your opinion?"

"That this house can be stockaded in, in the time you mention; and, as I have a strong reluctance to leave the family before it is in security, with your permission I will remain and superintend the work."

The offer was gladly accepted, on more accounts than one; and the captain, accustomed to be obeyed when he was in earnest, issued his orders forthwith, to let the work proceed. Joel, however, was excused in order that he might finish the planting he had commenced, and which a very few hands could complete within the required time. As no ditch was necessary, the work was of a very simple nature, and the major set about his portion of it without even re-entering the house.

The first thing was to draw a line for a trench some six or seven feet deep, that was to encircle the whole building, at a distance of about thirty yards from the house. This line ran on each side of the Hut, on the very verge of the declivities, rendering the flanks far more secure than the front, where it crossed the lawn on a gently inclining sur

face. In one hour the major had traced this line with accuracy; and he had six or eight men at work with spades, digging the trench. A gang of hands was sent into the woods, with orders to cut the requisite quantity of young chestnuts; and, by noon, a load of the material actually appeared on the ground. Still, nothing was done to the gates.

To own the truth, the captain was now delighted. The scene reminded him of some in his military life, and he bustled about, giving his orders with a good deal of the fire of youth renewed, taking care, however, in no manner to interfere with the plans of his son. Mike buried himself like a mole, and had actually advanced several feet, before either of the Yankees had got even a fair footing on the bottom of his part of the trench. As for Jamie Allen, he went to work with deliberation; but it was not long before his naked gray hairs were seen on a level with the surface of the ground. The digging was not hard, though a little stony, and the work proceeded with spirit and success. All that day and the next, and the next, and the next, the Knoll appeared alive, earth being cast upwards, teams moving, carpenters sawing, and laborers toiling. Many of the men protested that their work was useless, unnecessary, unlawful even; but no one dared hesitate under the eyes of the major, when his father had once issued a serious command. In the mean time, Joel's planting was finished, though he made many long pauses while at work on the flats, to look up and gaze at the scene of activity and bustle that was presented at the Knoll. On the fourth day, towards evening, he was obliged to join the general "bee," with the few hands he had retained with himself.

By this time, the trench was dug, most of the timber was prepared, and the business of setting up the stockade was commenced. Each young tree was cut to the length of twenty feet, and pointed at one end. Mortices, to receive cross-pieces, were cut at proper distances, and holes were bored to admit the pins. This was all the preparation, and the timbers were set in the trench, pointed ends uppermost. When a sufficient number were thus arranged, a few inches from each other, the cross-pieces were pinned

on, bringing the whole into a single connected frame, or bent. The bent was then raised to a perpendicular, and secured by pounding the earth around the lower ends of the timbers. The latter process required care and judgment, and it was intrusted to the especial supervision of the deliberate Jamie; the major having discovered that the Yankees, in general, were too impatient to get on, and to make a show. Sergeant Joyce was particularly useful in dressing the rows of timber, and in giving the whole arrangement a military air.

"Guid wark is far better than quick wark," observed the cool-headed Scotchman, as he moved about among the men, "and it's no the fuss and bustle of acteevity that is to give the captain pleasure. The thing that is well done, is done with the least noise and confusion. Set the stockades mair pairpendic'lar, my men."

"Aye — dress them too, my lads," added the venerable ex-sergeant.

"This is queer plantin', Jamie," put in Joel, "and queerer grain will come of it. Do you think these young chestnuts will ever grow ag'in, that you put them out in rows, like so much corn?"

"Now it's no for the growth we does it, Joel, but to presairve the human growth we have. To keep the savage bairbers o' the wilderness fra' clippin' our polls before the shearin' time o' natur' has gathered us a' in for the hairvest of etairnity. They that no like the safety we're makin' for them, can gang their way to 'ither places, where they'll find no forts or stockades to trouble their een."

"I'm not critical at all, Jamie, though to my notion a much better use for your timber plantation would be to turn it into sheds for cattle, in the winter months. I can see some good in that, but none in this."

"Bad luck to ye, then, Misther Sthroddle," cried Mike, from the bottom of the trench, where he was using a pounding instrument with the zeal of a pavior, "bad luck to the likes of ye, say I, Misther Strides! If ye've no relish for a fortification in a time of war, ye've only to shoulther yer knapsack, and go out into the open counthry,

where ye'll have all to yer own satisfaction. Is it forthif the house, will we? That we will, and not a hair of th missuss's head, nor of the young ladies' heads, nor of th masther's head, though he's mighty bald as it is, but not hair of all their heads shall be harmed, while Jamie an Mike and the bould ould sergeant here, can have thei way. I wish I had the trench full of yer savages, and gineral funeral we'd make of the vagabonds! Och They're the divil's imps, I hear from all sides, and no love do I owe them."

"And yet you're the bosom friend of Nick, who's anything but what I call a specimen of his people."

"Is it Nick ye're afther? Well, Nick's half-civilized accorthin' to yer Yankee manners, and he's no spicimen at all. Let him hear you call him by sich a name if ye want throuble."

Joel walked away muttering, leaving the laborers in doubt whether he relished least the work he was now obliged to unite in furthering, or Mike's hit at his own peculiar people. Still the work proceeded, and in one week from the day it was commenced the stockade was complete, its gate excepted. The entrance through the palisades was directly in front of that of the house, and both passages still remained open, one set of gates not being completed, and the other not yet being hung.

It was on a Saturday evening when the last palisade was placed firmly in the ground, and all the signs of the recent labor were removed, in order to restore as much of the former beauty of the Knoll as possible. It had been a busy week; so much so, indeed, as to prevent the major from holding any of that confidential intercourse with his mother and sisters, in which it had been his habit to indulge in former visits. The fatigues of the day sent everybody to their pillows early; and the snatches of discourse which passed had been affectionate and pleasant, rather than communicative. Now that the principal job was so near being finished, however, and the rubbish was cleared away, the captain summoned the family to the lawn again, to enjoy a delicious evening near the close of

the winning month of May. The season was early, and the weather more bland than was usual even in that sheltered and genial valley. For the first time that year Mrs. Willoughby consented to order the tea equipage to be carried to a permanent table that had been placed under the shade of a fine elm, in readiness for any *fête champêtre* of this simple character.

"Come, Wilhelmina, give us a cup of your fragrant Hyson, of which we have luckily abundance, tax or no tax. I should lose caste were it known how much American treason we have gulped down in this way; but a little tea up here in the forest can do no man's conscience any great violence in the long run. I suppose, Major Willoughby, his Majesty's forces do not disdain tea in these stirring times."

"Far from it, sir; we deem it so loyal to drink it, that it is said the port and sherry of the different messes at Boston are getting to be much neglected. I am an admirer of tea for itself, however, caring little about its collateral qualities. Farrel," — turning to his man, who was aiding Pliny the elder in arranging the table, — "when you are through here, bring out the basket you will find on the toilet in my room."

"True, Bob," observed the mother, smiling; "that basket has scarce been treated with civility. Not a syllable of thanks have I heard for all the fine things it contains."

"My mind has been occupied with care for your safety, dear mother, and that must be my excuse. Now, however, there is an appearance of security which gives one a breathing-time, and my gratitude receives a sudden impulse. As for you, Maud, I regret to be compelled to say that you stand convicted of laziness; not a single thing do I owe to your labors, or recollection of me."

"Is that possible!" exclaimed the captain, who was pouring water into the tea-pot. "Maud is the last person I should suspect of neglect of this nature; I do assure you, Bob, no one listens to news of your promotions and movements with more interest than Maud."

Maud herself made no answer. She bent her head aside, in a secret consciousness that her sister might alone detect, and form her own conclusions concerning the color that she felt warming her cheeks. But Maud's own sensitive feelings attributed more to Beulah than the sincere and simple-minded girl deserved. So completely was she accustomed to regard Robert and Maud as brother and sister, that even all which had passed produced no effect in unsettling her opinions, or in giving her thoughts a new direction. Just at this moment Farrel came back, and placed the basket on the bench, at the side of his master.

"Now, my dearest mother, and you, girls," — the major had begun to drop the use of the word "sisters" when addressing both the young ladies, — "now my dearest mother, and you, girls, I am about to give each her due. In the first place, I confess my own unworthiness, and acknowledge that I do not deserve one half the kind attention I have received in these various presents, after which we will descend to particulars."

The major then exposed every article contained in the basket, finding the words "mother" and "Beulah" pinned on each, but nowhere any indication that his younger sister had even borne him in mind. His father looked surprised at this, not to say a little grave; and he waited with evident curiosity for the gifts of Maud, as one thing after another came up, without any signs of her having recollected the absentee.

"This is odd, truly," observed the father, seriously; "I hope, Bob, you have done nothing to deserve this? I should be sorry to have my little girl affronted."

"I assure you, sir, that I am altogether ignorant of any act, and I can solemnly protest against any intention to give offense. If guilty, I now pray Maud to pardon me."

"You have done nothing, Bob — said nothing, Bob — thought nothing to offend me," cried Maud, eagerly.

"Why, then, have you forgotten him, darling, when your mother and sister have done so much in the way of recollection?" asked the captain.

"Forced gifts, my dear father, are no gifts. I do not like to be compelled to make presents."

This was uttered in a way to induce the major to throw all the articles back into the basket, as if he wished to get rid of the subject without further comment. Owing to this precipitation the scarf was not seen. Fortunately for Maud, who was ready to burst into tears, the service of the tea prevented any further allusion to the matter.

"You have told me, major," observed Captain Willoughby, "that your old regiment has a new colonel; but you have forgotten to mention his name. I hope it is my old messmate, Tom Wallingford, who wrote me he had some such hopes last year."

"General Wallingford has got a light dragoon regiment — General Meredith has my old corps; he is now in this country, at the head of one of Gates's brigades."

It is a strong proof of the manner in which Maud — Maud Willoughby as she was ever termed — had become identified with the family of the Hutted Knoll, that, with two exceptions, not a person thought of her when the name of this General Meredith was mentioned; though, in truth, he was the uncle of her late father. The exceptions were the major and herself. The former now never heard the name without thinking of his beautiful little playfellow, and nominal sister; while Maud, of late, had become curious and even anxious on the subject of her natural relatives. Still a feeling akin to awe, a sentiment that appeared as if it would be doing violence to a most solemn duty, prevented her from making any allusion to her change of thought, in the presence of those whom, during childhood, she had viewed only as her nearest relatives, and who still continued so to regard her. She would have given the world to ask Bob a few questions concerning the kinsman he had mentioned, but could not think of doing so before her mother, whatever she might be induced to attempt with the young man when by himself.

Nick next came strolling along, gazing at the stockade, and drawing near the table with an indifference to persons and things that characterized his habits. When close to the party he stopped, keeping his eye on the recent works.

"You see, Nick, I am about to turn soldier again in my old days," observed the captain. "It is now many years since you and I have met within a line of palisades. How do you like our work?"

"What you make him for, cap'in?"

"So as to be secure against any red-skins who may happen to long for our scalps."

"Why want your scalp? Hatchet hasn't been dug up atween us — bury him so deep can't find him in ten, two, six year."

"Aye, it has long been buried, it is true; but you red gentlemen have a trick of digging it up with great readiness when there is any occasion for it. I suppose you know, Nick, that there are troubles in the colonies?"

"Tell Nick all about him," answered the Indian evasively; "no read — no hear; don't talk much — talk most wid Irisher; can't understand what he want — say t'ing one way, den say him anoder."

"Mike is not very lucid, of a certainty," rejoined the captain, laughing, all the party joining in the merriment; "but he is a sterling good fellow, and is always to be found in a time of need."

"Poor rifle — nebber hit — shoot one way, look t'other!"

"He is no great shot, I will admit; but he is a famous fellow with a shillelah. Has he given you any of the news?"

"All he say, news — much news ten time, as one time. Cap'in lend Nick a quarter dollar yesterday."

"I did lend you a quarter, certainly, Nick; and I supposed it had gone to the miller for rum, before this. What am I to understand by your holding it out in this manner? — and you mean to repay me?"

"Sartain — good quarter — just like him cap'in lent Nick. Like as one pea. Nick man of honor; keep his word."

"This does look more like it than common, Nick. The money was to be returned to-day, but I did not expect to see it, so many previous contracts of that nature having been vacated, as the lawyers call it."

"Tuscarora chief always gentleman. What he say, he do. Good quarter dollar dat, cap'in?"

"It is unexceptionable, old acquaintance; I'll not disdain receiving it, as it may serve for a future loan."

"No need by'm-by — take him now; cap'in, lend Nick dollar; pay him to-morrow."

The captain protested against the sequitur that the Indian evidently wished to establish; declining, though in a good-natured manner, to lend the larger sum. Nick was disappointed, and walked sullenly away, moving nearer to the stockade, with the air of an offended man.

"That is an extraordinary fellow, sir!" observed the major; "I really wonder you tolerate him so much about the Hut. It might be a good idea to banish him, now that the war has broken out."

"Which would be a thing more easily said than done. A drop of water might as readily be banished from that stream, as an Indian from any part of the forest he may choose to visit. You brought him here yourself, Bob, and should not blame us for tolerating his presence."

"I brought him, sir, because I found he recognized me even in this dress, and it was wise to make a friend of him. Then I wanted a guide, and I was well assured he knew the way, if any man did. He is a surly scoundrel, however, and appears to have changed his character since I was a boy."

"If there be any change Bob, it is in yourself. Nick has been Nick these thirty years, or as long as I have known him. Rascal he is, or his tribe would not have cast him out. Indian justice is stern, but it is natural justice. No man is ever put to the ban among the red-men, until they are satisfied he is not fit to enjoy savage rights. In garrison, we always looked upon Nick as a clever knave, and treated him accordingly. When one is on his guard against such a fellow, he can do little harm, and this Tuscarora has a salutary dread of me, which keeps him in tolerable order during his visits to the Hut. The principal mischief he does here, is to get Mike and Jamie deeper in the Santa Cruz than I could wish; but the miller has his orders to sell no more rum."

"I hardly think you do Nick justice, Willoughby," observed the right-judging and gentle wife. "He has some good qualities; but you soldiers always apply martial law to the weaknesses of your fellow-creatures."

"And you tender-hearted women, my dear Wilhelmina, think everybody as good as yourselves."

"Remember, Hugh, when your son, there, had the canker-rash, how actively and readily the Tuscarora went into the forest to look for the gold-thread that even the doctors admitted cured him. It was difficult to find, Robert; but Nick remembered a spot where he had seen it, fifty miles off; and, without a request even from us, he travelled that distance to procure it."

"Yes, this is true," returned the captain, thoughtfully, "though I question if the cure was owing to the gold-thread, as you call it, Wilhelmina. Every man has some good quality or other; and, I much fear, some bad ones also. But, here is the fellow coming back, and I do not like to let him think himself of sufficient consequence to be the subject of our remarks."

"Very true, sir; it adds excessively to the trouble of such fellows, to let them fancy themselves of importance."

Nick now came slowly back, after having examined the recent changes to his satisfaction. He stood a moment in silence, near the table, and then, assuming an air of more dignity than common, he addressed the captain.

"Nick ole chief," he said. "Been at Council Fire, often as cap'in. Can't tell all he know; want to hear about new war."

"Why, Nick, it is a family quarrel this time. The French have nothing to do with it."

"Yengeese fight Yengeese — um?"

"I am afraid it will so turn out. Do not the Tuscaroras sometimes dig up the hatchet against the Tuscaroras?"

"Tuscarora man kill Tuscarora man — good — he quarrel, and kill he enemy. But Tuscarora warrior nebber take scalp of Tuscarora squaw and pappoose! What you t'ink he do dat for? Red-man no hog, to eat pork."

"It must be admitted, Nick, you are a very literal logi-

cian ; ' Dog won't eat dog,' is our English saying. Still the Yankee will fight the Yengeese, it would seem. In a word, the Great Father, in England, has raised the hatchet against his American children."

"How you like him, cap'in — um? Which go on straight path, which go on crooked? How you like him?"

"I like it little, Nick, and wish with all my heart the quarrel had not taken place."

"Mean to put on regimentals — hah? Mean to be cap'in ag'in? Follow drum and fife, like old time?"

"I rather think not, old comrade. After sixty, one likes peace better than war; and I intend to stay at home."

"What for, den, build fort? Why you put fence round a house, like pound for sheep?"

"Because I intend to stay there. The stockade will be good to keep off any or every enemy who may take it into their heads to come against us. You have known me defend a worse position than this."

"He got no gate," muttered Nick; "what he good for, widout gate? Yengeese, Yankees, red-man, Frenchman, walk in just as he please. No good to leave such squaw wid a door wide open."

"Thank you, Nick," cried Mrs. Willoughby. "I knew you were my friend, and have not forgotten the gold-thread."

"He very good," answered the Indian, with an important look. "Pappoose get well like not'ing. He a'most die, to-day; to-morrow he run about and play. Nick do him, too; cure him with gold-thread."

"Oh! you are, or were, quite a physician at one time, Nick. I remember when you had the small-pox yourself.'

The Indian turned with the quickness of lightning to Mrs. Willoughby, whom he startled with his energy, as he demanded, —

"You remember dat, Mrs. Cap'in! Who gib him — who cure him — um?"

"Upon my word, Nick, you almost frighten me. I fear I gave you the disease, but it was for your own good it was done. You were inoculated by myself, when the soldiers

were dying around us, because they had never had that care taken of them. All I inoculated lived; yourself among the number."

The startling expression passed away from the fierce countenance of the savage, leaving in its place another so kind and amicable as to prove he not only was aware of the benefit he had received, but that he was deeply grateful for it. He drew near to Mrs. Willoughby, took her still white and soft hand in his own sinewy and dark fingers, then dropped the blanket that he had thrown carelessly across his body, from a shoulder, and laid it on a mark left by the disease, by way of pointing to her good work. He smiled, as this was done.

"Ole mark," he said, nodding his head; "sign we good friend — he nebber go away while Nick live."

This touched the captain's heart, and he tossed a dollar towards the Indian, who suffered it, however, to lie at his feet unnoticed. Turning to the stockade, he pointed significantly at the open gateways.

"Great danger go t'rough little 'ole," he said, sententiously, walking away as he concluded. "Why you leave big 'ole open?"

"We must get those gates hung next week," said the captain, positively; "and yet it is almost absurd to apprehend anything serious in this remote settlement, and that at so early a period in the war."

Nothing further passed on the lawn worthy to be recorded. The sun set, and the family withdrew into the house, as usual, to trust to the overseeing care of Divine Providence, throughout a night passed in a wilderness. By common consent, the discourse turned upon things noway connected with the civil war, or its expected results, until the party was about to separate for the night, when the major found himself alone with his sisters, in his own little parlor, dressing-room, or study, whatever the room adjoining his chamber could properly be called.

"You will not leave us soon, Robert," said Beulah, taking her brother's hand with confiding affection. "I hardly think my father young and active enough, or rather alarmed enough, to live in times like these!"

"He is a soldier, Beulah, and a good one; so good that his son can teach him nothing. I wish I could say that he is as good a subject; I fear he leans to the side of the colonies."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Beulah. "Oh! that his son would incline in the same direction."

"Nay, Beulah," rejoined Maud, reproachfully, "you speak without reflection. Mamma bitterly regrets that papa sees things in the light he does. She thinks the parliament right, and colonies wrong."

"What a thing is a civil war!" ejaculated the major. "Here is husband divided against wife — son against father — brother against sister. I could almost wish I were dead, ere I had lived to see this!"

"Nay, Robert, it is not so bad as that, either," added Maud. "My mother will never oppose my father's will or judgment. Good wives, you know, never do that. She will only pray that he may decide right, and in a way that his children will never have cause to regret. As for me, I count for nothing, of course."

"And Beulah, Maud; is she nothing, too? Here will Beulah be praying for her brother's defeat, throughout this war. It has been some presentiment of this difference of opinion that has probably induced you to forget me, while Beulah and my mother were passing so many hours to fill that basket."

"Perhaps you do Maud injustice, Robert," said Beulah, smiling. "I think I can say none loves you better than our dear sister, or no one has thought of you more, in your absence."

"Why, then, does the basket contain no proof of this remembrance — not even a chain of hair, a purse, or a ring — nothing, in short, to show that I have not been forgotten, when away."

"Even if this be so," said Maud, with spirit, "in what am I worse than yourself? What proof is there that you have remembered us?"

"This," answered the major, laying before his sisters two small packages, each marked with the name of its proper

owner. "My mother has hers too, and my father has not been forgotten."

Beulah's exclamations proved how much she was gratified with her presents; principally trinkets and jewelry, suited to her years and station. First kissing the major, she declared her mother must see what she had received, before she retired for the night, and hurried from the room. That Maud was not less pleased, was apparent by her glowing cheeks and tearful eyes; though, for a wonder, she was far more restrained in the expression of her feelings. After examining the different articles with pleasure, for a minute or two, she went with a quick, impetuous movement to the basket, tumbled all the contents on the table, until she reached the scarf, which she tossed towards the major, saying, with a faint laugh, —

"There, unbeliever — heathen — is that nothing? Was that made in a minute, think you?"

"This!" cried the major, opening the beautiful, glossy fabric in surprise. "Is not this one of my father's old sashes to which I have fallen heir, in the order of nature?"

Maud dropped her trinkets, and seizing two corners of the sash, she opened it, in a way to exhibit its freshness and beauty.

"Is this old or worn?" she asked, reproachfully. "Your father never even saw it, Bob. It has not yet been around the waist of man."

"It is not possible! This would be the work of months — is so beautiful — you cannot have purchased it."

Maud appeared distressed at his doubts. Opening the folds still wider, she raised the centre of the silk to the light, and pointed to certain letters that had been wrought into the fabric, so ingeniously as to escape ordinary observation, and yet so plainly as to be distinctly legible when the attention was once drawn to them. The major took the sash into his own hands altogether, held it opened before the candles, and read the words "Maud Meredith" aloud. Dropping the sash, he turned to seek the face of the donor, but she had fled the room. He followed her footsteps and entered the library, just as she was about to escape from it by a different door.

"I am offended at your incredulity," said Maud, making an effort to laugh away the scene, "and will not remain to hear lame excuses. Your new regiment can have no nature in it, or brothers would not treat sisters thus."

"Maud Meredith is not my sister," he said earnestly, "though Maud Willoughby may be. Why is the name Meredith?"

"As a retort to one of your own allusions. Did you not call me Miss Meredith one day when I last saw you in Albany?"

"Aye, but that was in jest, my dearest Maud. It was not a deliberate thing, like the name on that sash."

"Oh! jokes may be premeditated as well as murder; and many a one is murdered, you know. Mine is a prolonged jest."

"Tell me, does my mother — does Beulah know who made this sash?"

"How else could it have been made, Bob? Do you think I went into the woods and worked by myself, like some romantic damsel who had an unmeaning secret to keep against the curious eyes of persecuting friends?"

"I know not what I thought — scarce know what I think now. But, my mother. Does she know of this name?"

Maud blushed to the eyes; but the habit and the love of truth were so strong in her, that she shook her head in the negative.

"Nor Beulah? She, I am certain, would not have permitted 'Meredith' to appear where 'Willoughby' should have been."

"Nor Beulah either, Major Willoughby," pronouncing the name with an affectation of reverence. "The honor of the Willoughbys is thus preserved from every taint, and all the blame must fall on poor Maud Meredith."

"You dislike the name of Willoughby, then, and intend to drop it in future. I have remarked that you sign yourself only 'Maud,' in your last letters. Never before, however, did I suspect the reason."

"Who wishes to live forever an impostor? It is not my

legal name, and I shall soon be called on to perform legal acts. Remember, Mr. Robert Willoughby, I am twenty. When it comes to pounds, shillings, and pence, I must not forge. A little habit is necessary to teach me the use of my own *bonâ fide* signature."

"But ours — the name is not hateful to you — you do not throw it aside seriously, forever?"

"Yours! What, the honored name of my dear, dearest father — of my mother — of Beulah — of yourself, Bob!

Maud did not remain to terminate her speech. Bursting into tears, she vanished.

CHAPTER VIII.

The village tower — 'tis joy to me! — I cry, the Lord is here!
The village bells! They fill the soul with ecstasy sincere.
And thus, I sing, the light hath shined to lands in darkness hurled,
Their sound is now in all the earth, their words throughout the world.
COXE.

ANOTHER night passed in peace within the settlement of the Hutted Knoll. The following morning was the Sabbath, and it came forth, balmy, genial, and mild, worthy of the great festival of the Christian world. On the subject of religion, Captain Willoughby was a little of a martinet, understanding by liberty of conscience, the right of improving by the instruction of those ministers who belonged to the Church of England. Several of his laborers had left him because he refused to allow of any other ministrations on his estate, his doctrine being that every man had a right to do as he pleased in such matters; and as he did not choose to allow of schism within the sphere of his own influence, if others desired to be schismatics, they were at liberty to go elsewhere in order to indulge their tastes. Joel Strides and Jamie Allen were both disaffected to this sort of orthodoxy, and they had frequent private discussions on its propriety; the former in his usual wily and jesuitical mode of sneering and insinuating, and the latter respectfully as related to his master, but earnestly as it concerned his conscience. Others too were dissentients, but with less repining — though occasionally they would stay away from Mr. Woods's services. Mike alone took an open and manly stand in the matter, and he a little out-Heroded Herod; or in other words, he exceeded the captain himself in strictness of construction. On the very morning we have just described, he was present at a discussion between the Yankee overseer and the Scotch mason, in which these two dissent-

ers, the first a congregationalist, and the last a seceder, were complaining of the hardship of a ten years' abstinence, during which no spiritual provender had been fed out to them from a proper source. The Irishman broke out upon the complainants in a way that will at once let the reader into the secret of the county Leitrim-man's principles, if he has any desire to know them.

"Bad luck to all sorts of religion but the right one!" cried Mike, in a most tolerant spirit. "Who d'ye think will be wishful of hearing mass and pr'aching that comes from any of your heretic parsons! Ye're as dape in the mire yerselves as Mr. Woods is in the woods, and no one to lade ye out of either, but an evil spirit that would rather see all mankind br'iling in agony, than dancing at a fair."

"Go to your confessional, Mike," returned Joel with a sneer. "It's a month or more sin' you seen it, and the priest will think you have forgotten him, and go away offended."

"Och! it's such a praist as the likes of ye has no nade of throubling! Yer conscience is aisy, Mr. Straddle, so that yer belly is filled and yer wages is paid. Bad luck to such religion!"

The allusion of Joel related to a practice of Michael's that is deserving of notice. It seems that the poor fellow, excluded by his insulated position from any communication with a priest of his own Church, was in the habit of resorting to a particular rock in the forest, where he would kneel and acknowledge his sins, very much as he would have done had the rock been a confessional containing one authorized to grant him absolution. Accident revealed the secret, and from that time Michael's devotion was a standing jest among the dissenters of the valley. The county Leitrim-man was certainly a little too much addicted to Santa Cruz, and he was accused of always visiting his romantic chapel after a debauch. Of course he was but little pleased with Joel's remark on the present occasion, and being like a modern newspaper, somewhat more vituperative than logical, he broke out as related.

"Jamie," continued Joel, too much accustomed to Mike's

violence to heed it, "it does seem to me a hardship to be obliged to frequent a church of which a man's conscience can't approve. Mr. Woods, though a native colonist, is an Old England parson, and he has so many popish ways about him, that I am under considerable concern of mind" — concern of itself, was not sufficiently emphatic for one of Joel's sensitive feelings — "I am under considerable concern of mind about the children. They sit under no other preaching; and though Lyddy and I do all we can to gainsay the sermons as soon as meetin' is out, some of it will stick. You may worry the best Christian into idolatry and unbelief, by parseverance and falsehood. Now that things look so serious too, in the colonies, we ought to be most careful."

Jamie did not clearly understand the application of the present state of the colonies, nor had he quite made up his mind touching the merits of the quarrel between parliament and the Americans. As between the Stuarts and the House of Hanover, he was for the former, and that mainly because he thought them Scotch, and it was surely a good thing for a Scotchman to govern England; but as between the Old countries and the New, he was rather inclined to think the rights of the first ought to predominate, there being something opposed to natural order, agreeably to his notions, in permitting the reverse of this doctrine to prevail. As for Presbyterianism, however, even in the mitigated form of New England church government, he deemed it to be so much better than episcopacy, that he would have taken up arms, old as he was, for the party that it could be made to appear was fighting to uphold the last. We have no wish to mislead the reader. Neither of the persons mentioned, Mike included, actually knew anything of the points in dispute between the different sects or churches mentioned; but only fancied themselves in possession of the doctrines, traditions, and authorities connected with the subject. These fancies, however, served to keep alive a discussion that soon had many listeners; and never before since his first ministration in the valley, did Mr. Woods meet as disaffected a congregation as on this day.

The church of the Hutted Knoll, or, as the clergyman more modestly termed it, the chapel, stood in the centre of the meadows, on a very low swell of their surface, where a bit of solid dry ground had been discovered, fit for such a purpose. The principal object had been to make it central; though some attention had been paid also to the picturesque. It was well shaded with young elms, just then opening into leaf; and about a dozen graves, principally of very young children, were memorials of the mortality of the settlement. The building was of stone, the work of Jamie Allen's own hands, but small, square, with a pointed roof, and totally without tower or belfry. The interior was of unpainted cherry, and through a want of skill in the mechanics, had a cold and raw look, little suited to the objects of the structure. Still, the small altar, the desk and the pulpit, and the large, square, curtained pew of the captain, the only one the house contained, were all well ornamented with hangings, or cloth, and gave the place somewhat of an air of clerical comfort and propriety. The rest of the congregation sat on benches, with kneeling-boards before them. The walls were plastered, and, a proof that parsimony had no connection with the simple character of the building, and a thing almost as unusual in America at that period as it is to-day in parts of Italy, the chapel was entirely finished.

It has been said that the morning of the particular Sabbath at which we have now arrived, was mild and balmy. The sun of the forty-third degree of latitude poured out its genial rays upon the valley, gilding the tender leaves of the surrounding forest with such touches of light as are best known to the painters of Italy. The fineness of the weather brought nearly all the working people of the settlement to the chapel quite an hour before the ringing of its little bell, enabling the men to compare opinions afresh on the subject of the political troubles of the times, and the women to gossip about their children.

On all such occasions, Joel was a principal spokesman, nature having created him for a demagogue, in a small way; an office for which education had in no degree unfitted

him. As had been usual with him of late, he turned the discourse on the importance of having correct information of what was going on, in the inhabited parts of the country, and of the expediency of sending some trustworthy person on such an errand. He had frequently intimated his own readiness to go, if his neighbors wished it.

"We're all in the dark here," he remarked, "and might stay so to the end of time, without some one to be relied on, to tell us the news. Major Willoughby is a fine man" — Joel meant morally, not physically — "but he's a king's officer, and nat'rally feels inclined to make the best of things for the rig'lars. The captain, too, was once a soldier himself, and his feelin's turn as it might be unav'idably, to the side he has been most used to. We are like people on a desert island, out here in the wilderness — and if ships won't arrive to tell us how matters come on, we must send one out to l'arn it for us. I'm the last man at the Dam" — so the *oi polloi* called the valley — "to say anything hard of either the captain or his son; but one is English born, and the other is English bred; and each will make a difference in a man's feelin's."

To this proposition the miller, in particular, assented; and, for the twentieth time, he made some suggestion about the propriety of Joel's going himself, in order to ascertain how the land lay.

"You can be back by hoeing," he added, "and have plenty of time to go as far as Boston, should you wish to."

Now, while the great events were in progress, which led to the subversion of British power in America, an undercurrent of feeling, if not of incidents, was running in this valley, which threatened to wash away the foundations of the captain's authority. Joel and the miller, if not downright conspirators, had hopes, calculations, and even projects of their own, that never would have originated with men of the same class, in another state of society; or, it might almost be said, in another part of the world. The sagacity of the overseer had long enabled him to foresee that the issue of the present troubles would be insurrection; and a sort of instinct which some men possess for the strongest

side, had pointed out to him the importance of being a patriot. The captain, he little doubted, would take part with the crown, and then no one knew what might be the consequences. It is not probable that Joel's instinct for the strongest side predicted the precise confiscations that subsequently ensued, some of which had all the grasping lawlessness of a gross abuse of power; but he could easily foresee that if the owner of the estate should be driven off, the property and its proceeds, probably for a series of years, would be very apt to fall under his own control and management. Many a patriot has been made by anticipations less brilliant than these; and as Joel and the miller talked the matter over between them, they had calculated all the possible emolument of fattening beeves, and packing pork for hostile armies, or isolated frontier posts, with a strong gusto for the occupation. Should open war but fairly commence, and could the captain only be induced to abandon the Knoll, and take refuge within a British camp, everything might be made to go smoothly, until settling day should follow a peace. At that moment, *non est inventus* would be a sufficient answer to a demand for any balance.

"They tell me," said Joel, in an aside to the miller, "that law is as good as done with in the Bay colony, already; and you know if the law has run out there, it will quickly come to an end here. York never had much character for law."

"That's true, Joel; then you know the captain himself is the only magistrate hereabout; and, when he is away, we shall have to be governed by a committee of safety, or something of that natur'."

"A committee of safety will be the thing!"

"What is a committee of safety, Joel?" demanded the miller, who had made far less progress in the arts of the demagogue than his friend, and who, in fact, had much less native fitness for the vocation; "I have heern tell of them regulations, but do not rightly understand 'em, a'ter all."

"You know what a committee is?" asked Joel, glancing inquiringly at his friend.

"I s'pose I do — it means men's takin' on themselves the trouble and care of public business."

"That's it — now a committee of safety means a few of us, for instance, having the charge of the affairs of this settlement, in order to see that no harm shall come to anything, especially to the people."

"It would be a good thing to have one here. The carpenter, and you and I, might be members, Joel."

"We'll talk about it, another time. The corn is just planted, you know; and it has got to be hoed twice, and topped, before it can be gathered. Let us wait and see how things come on at Boston."

While this incipient plot was thus slowly coming to a head, and the congregation was gradually collecting at the chapel, a very different scene was enacting in the Hut. Breakfast was no sooner through, than Mrs. Willoughby retired to her own sitting-room, whither her son was shortly summoned to join her. Expecting some of the inquiries which maternal affection might prompt, the major proceeded to the place named with alacrity; but, on entering the room, to his great surprise he found Maud with his mother. The latter seemed grave and concerned, while the former was not entirely free from alarm. The young man glanced inquiringly at the young lady, and he fancied he saw tears struggling to break out of her eyes.

"Come hither, Robert," said Mrs. Willoughby, pointing to a chair at her side, with a gravity that struck her son as unusual, "I have brought you here to listen to one of the old-fashioned lectures of which you got so many when a boy."

"Your advice, my dear mother — or even your reproofs — would be listened to with far more reverence and respect now, than I fear they were then," returned the major, seating himself by the side of Mrs. Willoughby, and taking one of her hands affectionately in both his own. "It is only in after-life that we learn to appreciate the tenderness and care of such a parent as you have been; though what I have done lately, to bring me in danger of the guard-house, I cannot imagine. Surely you cannot blame me for adhering to the crown at a moment like this!"

"I shall not interfere with your conscience in this

matter, Robert; and my own feelings, American as I am by birth and family, rather incline me to think as you think. I have wished to see you, my son, on a different business."

"Do not keep me in suspense, mother; I feel like a prisoner who is waiting to hear his charges read. What have I done?"

"Nay, it is rather for you to tell me what you have done. You cannot have forgotten, Robert, how very anxious I have been to awaken and keep alive family affection among my children; how very important both your father and I have always deemed it; and how strongly we have endeavored to impress this importance on all your minds. The tie of family, and the love it ought to produce, is one of the sweetest of all our earthly duties. Perhaps we old people see its value more than you young; but to us the weakening of it seems like a disaster only a little less to be deplored than death."

"Dearest, dearest mother! What can you — what do you mean? What can I — what can Maud have to do with this?"

"Do not your consciences tell you both? Has there not been some misunderstanding — perhaps a quarrel — certainly a coldness between you? A mother has a quick and a jealous eye; and I have seen for some time that there is not the old confidence, the free, natural manner in either of you that there used to be, and which always gave your father and me so much genuine happiness. Speak, then, and let me make peace between you."

Robert Willoughby would not have looked at Maud at that moment to have been given a regiment; as for Maud herself, she was utterly incapable of raising her eyes from the floor. The former colored to the temples, a proof of consciousness, his mother fancied, while the latter's face resembled ivory, as much as flesh and blood.

"If you think, Robert," continued Mrs. Willoughby, "that Maud has forgotten you, or shown pique for any little former misunderstanding during your last absence, you do her injustice. No one has done as much for you in the

way of memorial, that beautiful sash being all her own work, and made of materials purchased with her own pocket-money. Maud loves you truly, too; for whatever may be the airs she gives herself while you are together, when absent, no one seems to care more for your wishes and happiness than that very willful and capricious girl."

"Mother, mother!" murmured Maud, burying her face in both her hands.

Mrs. Willoughby was woman in all her feelings, habits, and nature. No one would have been more keenly alive to the peculiar sensibilities of her sex, under ordinary circumstances, than herself; but she was now acting and thinking altogether in her character of a mother; and so long and intimately had she regarded the two beings before her, in that common and sacred light, that it would have been like the dawn of a new existence for her, just then, to look upon them as not really akin to each other.

"I shall not, nor can I, treat either of you as a child," she continued, "and must therefore appeal only to your own good sense, to make peace. I know it can be nothing serious, but it is painful to me to see even an affected coolness among my children. Think, Maud, that we are on the point of a war, and how bitterly you would regret it, should any accident befall your brother, and your memory not be able to recall the time passed among us in his last visit, with entire satisfaction."

The mother's voice trembled, but tears no longer struggled about the eyelids of Maud. Her face was pale as death, and it seemed as if every ordinary fountain of sorrow were dried up.

"Dear Bob, this is too much!" she said, eagerly, though in husky tones. "Here is my hand — nay, here are both. Mother must not think this cruel charge is — can be true."

The major arose, approached his sister, and impressed a kiss on her cold cheek. Mrs. Willoughby smiled at these tokens of amity, and the conversation continued in a less earnest manner.

"This is right, my children," said the single-hearted Mrs. Willoughby, whose sensitive maternal love saw nothing

but the dreaded consequences of weakened domestic affections; "and I shall be all the happier for having witnessed it. Young soldiers, Maud, who are sent early from their homes, have too many inducements to forget them, and those they contain; and we women are so dependent on the love of our male friends, that it is wisdom in us to keep alive all the earlier ties, as long and as much as possible."

"I am sure, dearest mother," murmured Maud, though in a voice that was scarcely audible, "I shall be the last to wish to weaken this family tie. No one can feel a warmer, a more proper, a more sisterly affection for Robert than I do; he was always so kind to me when a child, and so ready to assist me, and so manly, and so everything that he ought to be, it is surprising you should have fancied there was any coldness between us!"

Major Willoughby even bent forward to listen, so intense was his curiosity to hear what Maud said; a circumstance which, had she seen it, would probably have closed her lips. But her eyes were riveted on the floor, her cheeks were bloodless, and her voice so low, that nothing but the breathless stillness he observed, would have allowed the young man to hear it, where he sat.

"You forget, mother," rejoined the major, satisfied that the last murmur had died on his ears, "that Maud will probably be transplanted into another family, one of these days, where we, who know her so well, and have reason to love her so much, can only foresee that she will form new and even stronger ties than any that accident may have formed for her here."

"Never — never," exclaimed Maud, fervently; "I can never love any as well as I love those who are in this house."

The relief she wanted stopped her voice, and bursting into tears, she threw herself into Mrs. Willoughby's arms, and sobbed like a child. The mother now motioned to her son to quit the room, while she remained herself to soothe the weeping girl, as she so often had done before when overcome by her infantile or youthful griefs. Throughout

this interview, habit and single-heartedness so exercised their influence, that the excellent matron did not, in the most remote manner, recollect that her son and Maud were not natural relatives. Accustomed, herself, to see the latter every day, and to think of her, as she had from the moment when she was placed in her arms, an infant of a few weeks old, the effect that separation might produce on others never presented itself to her mind. Major Willoughby, a boy of eight when Maud was received in the family, had known from the first her precise position, and it was perhaps morally impossible that he should not recall the circumstance in their subsequent intercourse — more especially as school, college, and the army had given him so much leisure to reflect on such things, apart from the influence of family habits, while it was to be expected that a consequence of his own peculiar mode of thinking on this subject would be to produce something like a sympathetic sentiment in the bosom of Maud. Until within the last few years, however, she had been so much of a child herself, and had been treated so much like a child by the young soldier, that it was only through a change in him, that was perceptible only to herself, and which occurred when he first met her grown into womanhood, that she alone admitted any feelings that were not strictly to be referred to sisterly regard. All this, nevertheless, was a profound mystery to every member of the family, but the two who were its subjects; no other thoughts than the simplest and most obvious ever suggesting themselves to the minds of the others.

In half an hour Mrs. Willoughby had quieted all Maud's present troubles, and the whole family left the house to repair to the chapel. Michael, though he had no great reverence for Mr. Woods's ministrations, had constituted himself sexton, an office which had devolved on him in consequence of his skill with the spade. Once initiated into one branch of this duty, he had insisted on performing all the others; and it was sometimes a curious spectacle to see the honest fellow busy about the interior of the building during service, literally stopping one of his ears with a

thumb, with a view, while he acquitted himself of what he conceived to be temporal obligations, to exclude as much heresy as possible. One of his rules was to refuse to commence tolling the bell until he saw Mrs. Willoughby and her daughter within a reasonable distance of the place of worship; a rule that had brought about more than one lively discussion between himself and the leveling-minded, if not heavenly-minded, Joel Strides. On the present occasion this simple process did not pass altogether without a dispute.

"Come, Mike, it's half-past ten; the people have been waiting about the meetin' 'us some time; you should open the doors and toll the bell. People can't wait forever for anybody, not even for your church."

"Then let 'em just go home ag'in, and come when they're called. Because the ould women, and the young women, and the childer, and the likes o' them, wishes to scandalize their fellow-cr'atures, Christians I will not call 'em, let 'em mate in the mill or the school-house, and not come forenent a church on such a business as that. Is it toll the bell, will I, afore the missus is in sight? No — not for a whole gineration of ye, Joel; and every one o' them, too, a much likelier man than ye bees yerself."

"Religion is no respecter of persons," returned the philosophical Joel. "Them that like masters and mistresses may have them for all me; but it riles me to meet with meanness."

"It does!" cried Mike, looking up to his companion with a very startling expression of wonder. "If that be true, ye must be in a mighty troubled state, most of the livelong day, ye must!"

"I tell you, Michael O'Hearn, religion is no respecter of persons. The Lord cares jist as much for me as he does for Captain Willoughby, or his wife, or his son, or his darters, or anything that is his."

"Divil burn me, now, Joel, if I believe that!" again cried Mike, in his dogmatic manner. "Them that understands knows the difference between mankind, and I'm sure it can be no great sacret to the Lord when it is so well known

to a poor fellow like myself. There's a plenthy of fellow-cr'atures that has a mighty good notion of their own excellence, but when it comes to r'ason and thruth, it's no very great figure ye all make, in proving what ye say. This chapel is the master's, if chapel the heretical box can be called, and yonder bell was bought wid his money; and the rope is his; and the hands that mane to pull it is his; and so there's little use in talking agin rocks, and agin minds that's made up even harder than rocks, and to spare."

This settled the matter. The bell was not tolled until Mrs. Willoughby and her daughters had got fairly through the still unprotected gateway of the stockade, although the recent discussion of political questions had so far substituted discontent for subordination in the settlement, that more than half of those who were of New England descent had openly expressed their dissatisfaction at the delay. Mike, however, was as unmoved as the little chapel itself, refusing to open the door until the proper moment had arrived, according to his own notion of the fitness of things. He then proceeded to the elm, against which the little bell was hung, and commenced tolling it with as much seriousness as if the conveyer of sounds had been duly consecrated.

When the family from the Hut entered the chapel, all the rest of the congregation were in their customary seats. This arrival, however, added materially to the audience, Great Smash and Little Smash, the two Plinies, and some five or six colored children between the ages of six and twelve, following in the train of their master. For the blacks a small gallery had been built, where they could sit apart, a proscribed, if not a persecuted race. Little did the Plinies or the Smashes, notwithstanding, think of this. Habit had rendered their situation more than tolerable, for it had created notions and usages that would have rendered them uncomfortable, in closer contact with the whites. In that day the two colors never ate together, by any accident; the Eastern castes being scarcely more rigid in the observance of their rules than the people of America were on this great point. The men who would toil together, joke together, and pass their days in familiar intercourse, would

not sit down at the same board. There seemed to be a sort of contamination, according to the opinions of one of these castes, in breaking bread with the other. This prejudice often gave rise to singular scenes, more especially in the households of those who habitually labored in company with their slaves. In such families it not unfrequently happened that a black led the councils of the farm. He might be seen seated by the fire, uttering his opinions dogmatically, reasoning warmly against his own master, and dealing out his wisdom *ex cathedrâ*, even while he waited with patient humility when he might approach and satisfy his hunger, after all of the other color had quitted the table.

Mr. Woods was not fortunate in the selection of his subject on the occasion of which we are writing. There had been so much personal activity, and so much political discussion during the past week, as to prevent him from writing a new sermon, and of course he was compelled to fall back on the other end of the barrel. The recent arguments inclined him to maintain his own opinions, and he chose a discourse that he had delivered to the garrison of which he had last been chaplain. To this choice he had been enticed by the text, which was, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," a mandate that would be far more palatable to an audience composed of royal troops, than to one which had become a good deal disaffected by the arts and arguments of Joel Strides and the miller. Still, as the sermon contained a proper amount of theological truisms, and had a sufficiency of general orthodoxy to cover a portion of its political bearing, it gave far more dissatisfaction to a few of the knowing than to the multitude. To own the truth, the worthy priest was so much addicted to continuing his regimental and garrison course of religious instruction, that his ordinary listeners would scarcely observe this tendency to loyalty, though it was far different with those who were eagerly looking for causes of suspicion and denunciation in the higher quarters.

"Well," said Joel, as he and the miller, followed by their respective families, proceeded towards the mill, where the household of the Strides were to pass the remainder of the

day, "well, this is a bold sermon for a minister to preach in times like these! I kind o' guess, if Mr. Woods was down in the Bay, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's' wouldn't be doctrine to be so quietly received by every congregation. What's your notion about that, Miss Strides?"

Miss Strides thought exactly as her husband thought, and the miller and his wife were not long in chiming in with her accordingly. The sermon furnished material for conversation throughout the remainder of the day at the mill, and divers conclusions were drawn from it, that were ominous to the preacher's future comfort and security.

Nor did the well-meaning parson entirely escape comment in the higher quarters.

"I wish, Woods, you had made choice of some other subject," observed the captain, as he and his friend walked the lawn together, in waiting for a summons to dinner. "In times like these one cannot be too careful of the political notions he throws out; and to own the truth to you, I am more than half inclined to think that Cæsar is exercising quite as much authority in these colonies as justly falls to his share."

"Why, my dear captain, you have heard this very sermon three or four times already, and you have more than once mentioned it with commendation!"

"Aye, but that was in garrison, where one is obliged to teach subordination. I remember the sermon quite well, and a very good one it was, twenty years since, when you first preached it; but"—

"I apprehend, Captain Willoughby, that *tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.* But the mandates and maxims of the Saviour are far beyond the mutations and erring passions of mortality. His sayings are intended for all times."

"Certainly, as respects their general principles and governing truths. But no text is to be interpreted without some reference to circumstances. All I mean is, that the preaching which might be very suitable to a battalion of his Majesty's Fortieth, might be very unsuitable for the

laborers of the Hutted Knoll; more especially so soon after what I find is called the Battle of Lexington."

The summons to dinner cut short the discourse, and probably prevented a long, warm, but friendly argument.

That afternoon and evening Captain Willoughby and his son had a private and confidential discourse. The former advised the major to rejoin his regiment without delay, unless he were prepared to throw up his commission and take sides with the colonists altogether. To this the young soldier would not listen, returning to the charge in the hope of rekindling the dormant flame of his father's loyalty.

The reader is not to suppose that Captain Willoughby's own mind was absolutely made up to fly into open rebellion. Far from it. He had his doubts and misgivings on the subjects of both principles and prudence, but he inclined strongly to the equity of the demands of the Americans. Independence or separation, if thought of at all in 1775, entered into the projects of but very few; the warmest wish of the most ardent of the whigs of the colonies being directed towards compromise, and a distinct recognition of their political franchises. The events that followed so thickly were merely the consequences of causes which, once set in motion, soon attained an impetus that defied ordinary human control It was, doubtless, one of the leading incidents of the great and mysterious scheme of Divine Providence for the government of the future destinies of man, that political separation should commence in this hemisphere at that particular juncture, to be carried out, ere the end of a century, to its final and natural conclusion.

But the present interview was less to debate the merits of any disputed question, than to consult on the means of future intercourse, and to determine on what was best to be done at the present moment. After discussing the matter pro and con, it was decided that the major should quit the Knoll the next day, and return to Boston, avoiding Albany, and those points of the country in which he would be most exposed to detection. So many persons were joining the American forces that were collecting about the besieged town, that his journeying on the proper road would excite

no suspicion; and once in the American camp, nothing would be easier than to find his way into the peninsula. All this young Willoughby felt no difficulty in being able to accomplish, provided he could get into the settlements without being followed by information of his real character. The period of spies, and of the severe exercise of martial law, was not yet reached; and all that was apprehended was detention. Of the last, however, there was great danger; positive certainty, indeed, in the event of discovery; and Major Willoughby had gleaned enough during his visit, to feel some apprehensions of being betrayed. He regretted having brought his servant with him; for the man was a European, and by his dullness and speech might easily get them both into difficulties. So serious, indeed, was this last danger deemed by the father, that he insisted on Robert's starting without the man, leaving the last to follow on the first suitable occasion.

As soon as this point was settled, there arose the question of the proper guide. Although he distrusted the Tuscarora, Captain Willoughby, after much reflection, came to the opinion that it would be safer to make an ally of him than to give him an opportunity of being employed by the other side. Nick was sent for, and questioned. He promised to take the major to the Hudson, at a point between Lunenburg and Kinderhook, where he would be likely to cross the river without awakening suspicion; his own reward to depend on his coming back to the Hutted Knoll with a letter from the major, authorizing his father to pay him for his services. This plan, it was conceived, would keep Nick true to his faith, for the time being at least.

Many other points were discussed between the father and son, the latter promising, if anything of importance occurred, to find the means of communicating it to his friends at the Knoll, while Farrel was to follow his master at the end of six weeks or two months with letters from the family. Many of the captain's old army friends were now in situations of authority and command, and he sent to them messages of prudence, and admonitions to be

moderate in their views, which subsequent events proved were little regarded. To General Gage he even wrote, using the precaution not to sign the letter, though its sentiments were so much in favor of the colonies, that had it been intercepted, it is most probable the Americans would have forwarded the missive to its direction.

These matters arranged, the father and son parted for the night, some time after the house clock had struck the hour of twelve.

CHAPTER IX.

Though old in cunning, as in years,
He is so small, that like a child,
In face and form, the god appears,
And sportive like a boy, and wild;
Lightly he moves from place to place
In none at rest, in none content;
Delighted some new toy to chase —
On childish purpose ever bent.
Beware! to childhood's spirits gay
Is added more than childhood's power;
And you perchance may rue the hour
That saw you join his seeming play.

GRIFFIN.

THE intention of the major to quit the Knoll that day was announced to the family at breakfast on the following morning. His mother and Beulah heard this intelligence with a natural and affectionate concern, that they had no scruples in avowing; but Maud seemed to have so schooled her feelings, that the grief she really felt was under a prudent control. To her it appeared as if her secret were constantly on the point of exposure, and she believed that would cause her instant death. To survive its shame was impossible in her eyes, and all the energies of her nature were aroused with the determination of burying her weakness in her own bosom. She had been so near revealing it to Beulah, that even now she trembled as she thought of the precipice over which she had been impending, strengthening her resolution by the recollection of the danger she had run.

As a matter of necessary caution, the intended movements of the young man were kept a profound secret from all in the settlement. Nick had disappeared in the course of the night, carrying with him the major's pack, having repaired to a designated point on the stream, where he was

to be joined by his fellow-traveller at an hour named. There were several forest paths which led to the large settlements. That usually travelled was in the direction of old Fort Stanwix, first proceeding north, and then taking a southeastern direction along the shores of the Mohawk. This was the route by which the major had come. Another struck the Otsego, and joined the Mohawk at a point more than once mentioned in our opening chapters. As these were the two ordinary paths — if paths they could be called, where few or no traces of footsteps were visible — it was more than probable any plan to arrest the traveller would be laid in reference to their courses. The major had consequently resolved to avoid them both, and to strike boldly into the mountains until he should reach the Susquehannah, cross that stream on its flood-wood, and finding one of its tributaries that flowed in from the eastward, by following its banks to the high land which divides the waters of the Mohawk from this latter river, place himself on a route that would obliquely traverse the water-courses, which in this part of the country have all a general north or south direction. Avoiding Schenectady and Albany, he might incline towards the old establishments of the descendants of the emigrants from the Palatinate on the Schoharie, and reach the Hudson at a point deemed safe for his purposes, through some of the passes of the mountains in their vicinity. He was to travel in the character of a land-owner who had been visiting his patent, and his father supplied him with a map and an old field-book, which would serve to corroborate his assumed character in the event of suspicion or arrest. Not much danger was apprehended, however, the quarrel being yet too recent to admit of the organization and distrust that subsequently produced so much vigilance and activity.

"You will contrive to let us hear of your safe arrival in Boston, Bob," observed the father, as he sat stirring his tea in a thoughtful way; "I hope to God the matter will go no further, and that our apprehensions, after all, have given this dark appearance to what has already happened."

"Ah, my dear father, you little know the state of the country through which I have so lately travelled!" answered the major, shaking his head. "An alarm of fire in an American town would scarce create more movement, and not so much excitement. The colonies are alive, particularly those of New England, and a civil war is inevitable; though I trust the power of England will render it short."

"Then, Robert, do not trust yourself among the people of New England," cried the anxious mother. "Go rather to New York, where we have so many friends and so much influence. It will be far easier to reach New York than to reach Boston."

"That may be true, mother, but it will scarcely be as creditable. My regiment is in Boston, and its enemies are before Boston. An old soldier like Captain Willoughby will tell you that the major is a very necessary officer to a corps. No, no; my best course is to fall into the current of adventurers who are pushing towards Boston, and appear like one of their number, until I can get an opportunity of stealing away from them, and join my own people."

"Have a care, Bob, that you do not commit a military crime. Perhaps these provincial officers may take it into their heads to treat you as a spy, should you fall into their hands!"

"Little fear of that, sir. At present it is a sort of colonial scramble for what they fancy liberty. That they will fight, in their zeal, I know — for I have seen it; but matters have not at all gone as far as you appear to apprehend. I question if they would even stop Gage himself from going through their camp, were he outside, and did he express a desire to return."

"And yet you tell me arms and ammunition are seized all over the land; that several old half-pay officers of the king have been arrested, and put under a sort of parole!"

"Such things were talked of, certainly, though I question if they have yet been done. Luckily for yourself

under your present opinions at least, you are not on half pay even."

"It is fortunate, Bob, though you mention it with a smile. With my present feelings, I should indeed be sorry to be on half-pay, or quarter-pay, were there such a thing. I now feel myself my own master, at liberty to follow the dictates of my own conscience and the suggestions of my judgment."

"Well, sir, you are a little fortunate, it must be acknowledged. I cannot see how any man can be at liberty to throw off the allegiance he owes his natural sovereign. What think you, Maud?"

This was said half in bitterness, half in jest, though the appeal at its close was uttered in a serious manner, and a little anxiously. Maud hesitated, as if to muster her thoughts, ere she replied.

"My feelings are against rebellion," she said, at length; "though I fear my reason tells me there is no such thing as a natural sovereign. If the parliament had not given us the present family a century since, by what rule of nature would it be our princes, Bob?"

"Ah! these are some of the flights of your rich imagination, my dear Maud. It is parliament that has made them our princes, and parliament, at least, is our legal, constitutional master."

"That is just the point in dispute. Parliament may be the rightful governors of England, but are they the rightful governors of America?"

"Enough," said the captain, rising from table. "We will not discuss such a question, just as we are about to separate. Go, my son; a duty that is to be performed, cannot be done too soon. Your fowling-piece and ammunition are ready for you, and I shall take care to circulate the report that you have gone to pass an hour in the woods, in search of pigeons. God bless you, Bob; however we may differ in this matter — you are my son — my only son — my dear and well beloved boy. God forever bless you!"

A profound stillness succeeded this burst of nature, and then the young man took his leave of his mother and the

girls. Mrs. Willoughby kissed her child. She did not even weep until she was in her room. Then, indeed, she went to her knees, her tears, and her prayers. Beulah, all heart and truth as she was, wept freely on her brother's neck; but Maud, though pale and trembling, received his kiss without returning it; though she could not help saying with a meaning that the young man had in his mind all that day, aye, and for many succeeding days, "Be careful of yourself, and run into no unnecessary dangers. God bless you, dear, dear Bob."

Maud alone followed the movements of the gentlemen with her eyes. The peculiar construction of the Hut prevented external view from the south windows; but there was a loop in a small painting-room of the garret that was especially under her charge. Thither, then, she flew, to ease her nearly bursting heart with tears, and to watch the retiring footsteps of Robert. She saw him, accompanied by his father and the chaplain, stroll leisurely down the lawn, conversing and affecting an indifferent manner, with a wish to conceal his intent to depart. The glass of the loop was open, to admit the air, and Maud strained her sense of hearing, in the desire to catch, if possible, another tone of his voice. In this she was unsuccessful; though he stopped and gazed back at the Hut, as if to take a parting look. Her father and Mr. Woods did not turn, and Maud thrust her hand through the opening and waved her handkerchief. "He will think it Beulah or I," she thought, "and it may prove a consolation to him to know how much we love him." The major saw the signal, and returned it. His father unexpectedly turned, and caught a glimpse of the retiring hand as it was disappearing within the loop. "That is our precious Maud," he said, without other thought than of her sisterly affection. "It is her painting-room. Beulah's is on the other side of the gateway; but the window does not seem to be open."

The major started, kissed his hand fervently five or six times, and then he walked on. As if to change the conversation, he said hastily, and with a little want of connection with what had just passed, —

"Yes, sir, that gate, sure enough. Have it hung at once, I do entreat of you. I shall not be easy until I hear that both the gates are hung — that in the stockade, and that in the house itself."

"It was my intention to commence to-day," returned the father, "but your departure has prevented it. I will wait a day or two, to let your mother and sisters tranquillize their minds a little, before we besiege them with the noise and clamor of the workmen."

"Better besiege them with that, my dear sir, than leave them exposed to an Indian, or even a rebel attack."

The major then went on to give some of his more modern military notions touching the art of defense. As one of the old school, he believed his father a miracle of skill; but what young man who had enjoyed the advantages of ten or fifteen years of the most recent training in any branch of knowledge, ever believed the educations of those who went before him beyond the attacks of criticism. The captain listened patiently, and with an old man's tolerance for inexperience, glad to have any diversion to unhappy thoughts.

All this time Maud watched their movements from the loop, with eyes streaming with tears. She saw Robert pause and look back, again and again; and once more she thrust out the handkerchief. It was plain, however, he did not see it; for he turned and proceeded, without any answering signal.

"He never can know whether it was Beulah or I," thought Maud; "yet he may fancy we are both here."

On the rocks that overhung the mills, the gentlemen paused and conversed for quite a quarter of an hour. The distance prevented Maud from discerning their countenances; but she could perceive the thoughtful, and as she fancied melancholy, attitude of the major, as, leaning on his fowling-piece, his face was turned towards the Knoll, and his eyes were really riveted on the loop. At the end of the time mentioned, the young soldier shook hands hastily and covertly with his companions, hurried towards the path, and descended out of sight, following the course of the stream. Maud saw him no more, though her father and Mr. Woods

stood on the rocks quite half an hour longer, catching occasional glimpses of his form, as it came out of the shadows of the forest into the open space of the little river; and, indeed, until the major was within a short distance of the spot where he was to meet the Indian. Then they heard the reports of both barrels of his fowling-piece fired in quick succession, the signals that he had joined his guide. This welcome news received, the two gentlemen returned slowly towards the house.

Such was the commencement of a day, which, while it brought forth nothing alarming to the family of the Hutted Knoll, was still pregnant with important consequences Major Willoughby disappeared from the sight of his father about ten in the morning, and before twelve, the settlement was alive with the rumors of a fresh arrival. Joel knew not whether to rejoice or to despair, as he saw a party of eight or ten armed men rising above the rock, and holding their course across the flats towards the house. He entertained no doubt of its being a party sent by the provincial authorities to arrest the captain, and he foresaw the probability of another's being put into the lucrative station of receiver of the estate, during the struggle which was in perspective. It is surprising how many, and sometimes how pure patriots are produced by just such hopes as those of Joel. At this day there is scarce an instance of a confiscated estate, during the American Revolution, connected with which racy traditions are not to be found, that tell of treachery very similar to this contemplated by the overseer; in some instances of treachery effected by means of kinsmen and false friends.

Joel had actually got on his Sunday coat, and was making his way towards the Knoll, in order to be present, at least, at the anticipated scene, when, to his amazement, and somewhat to his disappointment, he saw the captain and chaplain moving down the lawn, in a manner to show that these unexpected arrivals brought not unwelcome guests. This caused him to pause; and when he perceived that the only two among the strangers who had the air of gentlemen, were met with cordial shakes of the hand, he turned back

towards his own tenement, a half-dissatisfied and yet half-contented man.

The visit which the captain had come out to receive, instead of producing any uneasiness in his family, was, in truth, highly agreeable and very opportune. It was Evert Beekman, with an old friend, attended by a party of chain-bearers, hunters, etc., on his way from the "Patent" he owned in the neighborhood — that is to say, within fifty miles — and halting at the Hutted Knoll, under the courteous pretense of paying his respects to the family, but, in reality, to bring the suit he had now been making to Beulah for quite a twelvemonth, to a successful termination.

The attachment between Evert Beekman and Beulah Willoughby was of a character so simple, so sincere, and so natural, as scarce to furnish materials for a brief episode. The young man had not made his addresses without leave obtained from the parents; he had been acceptable to the daughter from the commencement of their acquaintance; and she had only asked time to reflect, ere she gave her answer, when he proposed, a day or two before the family left New York.

To own the truth, Beulah was a little surprised that her suitor had delayed his appearance till near the close of May, when she had expected to see him at the beginning of the month. A letter, however, was out of the question, since there was no mode of transmitting it, unless the messenger were sent expressly; and the young man had now come in person to make his own apologies.

Beulah received Evert Beekman naturally, and without the least exaggeration of manner, though a quiet happiness beamed in her handsome face, that said as much as lover could reasonably desire. Her parents welcomed him cordially, and the suitor must have been dull indeed, not to anticipate all he hoped. Nor was it long before every doubt was removed. The truthful, conscientious Beulah had well consulted her heart; and, while she blushed at her own temerity, she owned her attachment to her admirer. The very day of his arrival they became formally betrothed. As our tale, however, has but a secondary connection with

this little episode, we shall not dwell on it more than is necessary to the principal object. It was a busy morning, altogether; and though there were many tears, there were also many smiles. By the time it was usual, at that bland season, for the family to assemble on the lawn, everything, even to the day, was settled between Beulah and her lover and there was a little leisure to think of other things. It was while the younger Pliny and one of the Smashes were preparing the tea, that the following conversation was held, being introduced by Mr. Woods, in the way of digressing from feelings in which he was not quite as much interested as some of the rest of the party.

"Do you bring us anything new from Boston?" demanded the chaplain. "I have been dying to ask the question these two hours — ever since dinner, in fact; but, somehow Mr. Beekman, I have not been able to edge in an inquiry."

This was said good-naturedly, but quite innocently; eliciting smiles, blushes, and meaning glances in return. Evert Beekman, however, looked grave before he made his reply.

"To own the truth, Mr. Woods," he said, "things are getting to be very serious. Boston is surrounded by thousands of our people; and we hope not only to keep the king's forces in the peninsula, but, in the end, to drive them out of the colony."

"This is a bold measure, Mr. Beekman! a very bold step to take against Cæsar!"

"Woods preached about the rights of Cæsar no longer ago than yesterday, you ought to know, Beekman," put in the laughing captain; "and I am afraid he will be publicly praying for the success of the British arms before long."

"I did pray for the royal family," said the chaplain, with spirit, "and hope I shall ever continue to do so."

"My dear fellow, I do not object to that. Pray for all conditions of men, enemies and friends alike; and particularly, pray for our princes; but pray also to turn the hearts of their advisers."

Beekman seemed uneasy. He belonged to a decidedly whig family, and was himself, at the very moment, spoken

of as the colonel of one of the regiments about to be raised in the colony of New York. He held that rank in the militia, as it was; and no one doubted his disposition to resist the British forces at the proper moment. He had even stolen away from what he conceived to be very imperative duties, to secure the woman of his heart before he went into the field. His answer, in accordance, partook essentially of the bias of his mind.

"I do not know, sir, that it is quite wise to pray so very willingly for the royal family," he said. "We may wish them worldly happiness, and spiritual consolation, as part of the human race; but political and specific prayers, in times like these, are to be used with caution. Men attach more than the common religious notion, just now, to prayers for the king, which some interpret into direct petitions against the United Colonies."

"Well," rejoined the captain, "I cannot agree to this myself. If there were a prayer to confound parliament and its counsels, I should be very apt to join in it cordially; but I am not yet ready to throw aside king, queen, princes, and princesses, all in a lump, on account of a few taxes, and a little tea."

"I am sorry to hear this from you, sir," answered Evert. "When your opinions were canvassed lately at Albany, I gave a sort of pledge that you were certainly more with us than against us."

"Well then, I think, Beekman, you drew me in my true outlines. In the main, I think the colonies right, though I am still willing to pray for the king."

"I am one of those, Captain Willoughby, who look forward to the most serious times. The feeling throughout the colonies is tremendous, and the disposition on the part of the royal officers is to meet the crisis with force."

"You have a brother, a captain of foot, in one of the regiments of the crown, Colonel Beekman — what are his views in this serious state of affairs?"

"He has already thrown up his commission — refusing even to sell out, a privilege that was afforded him. His name is now before Congress for a majority in one of the new regiments that are to be raised."

The captain looked grave; Mrs. Willoughby anxious; Beulah interested; and Maud thoughtful.

"This has a serious aspect, truly," observed the first. "When men abandon all their early hopes, to assume new duties, there must be a deep and engrossing cause. I had not thought it like to come to this!"

"We have had hopes Major Willoughby might do the same; I know that a regiment is at his disposal, if he be inclined to join us. No one would be more gladly received. We are to have Gates, Montgomery, Lee, and many other old officers from regular corps, on our side."

"Will Colonel Lee be put at the head of the American forces?"

"I think not, sir. He has a high reputation, and a good deal of experience, but he is a humorist; and what is something, though you will pardon it, he is not an American born."

"It is quite right to consult such considerations, Beekman; were I in Congress, they would influence me, Englishman as I am, and in many things must always remain."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Willoughby," exclaimed the chaplain — "right down rejoiced to hear you say so! A man is bound to stand by his birthplace, through thick and thin."

"How do you then reconcile your opinions in this matter to your birthplace, Woods?" asked the laughing captain.

To own the truth, the chaplain was a little confused. He had entered into the controversy with so much zeal, of late, as to have imbibed the feelings of a thorough partisan; and, as is usual with such philosophers, was beginning to overlook everything that made against his opinions, and to exaggerate everything that sustained them.

"How?" he cried, with zeal, if not with consistency, "why, well enough. I am an Englishman, too, in the general view of the case, though born in Massachusetts. Of English descent, and an English subject."

"Umph! Then Beekman, here, who is of Dutch de-

scent, is not bound by the same principles as we are our selves?"

"Not by the same feelings, possibly; but surely, by the same principles. Colonel Beekman is an Englishman by construction, and you are by birth. Yes, I'm what may be called a constructive Englishman."

Even Mrs. Willoughby and Beulah laughed at this, though not a smile had crossed Maud's face since her eye had lost Robert Willoughby from view. The captain's ideas seemed to take a new direction, and he was silent some little time before he spoke.

"Under the circumstances in which we are now placed, as respects each other, Mr. Beekman," he said, "it is proper that there should be no concealments on grave points. Had you arrived an hour or two earlier, you would have met a face well known to you, in that of my son, Major Willoughby."

"Major Willoughby, my dear sir!" exclaimed Beekman, with a start of unpleasant surprise; "I had supposed him with the royal army in Boston. You say he has left the Knoll — I sincerely hope not for Albany."

"No — I wished him to go in that direction, at first, and to see you in particular; but his representations of the state of the country induced me to change my mind; he travels by a private way, avoiding all the towns of note or size."

"In that he has done well, sir. Near to me as a brother of Beulah's must always seem, I should be sorry to see Bob just at the moment. If there be no hope of getting him to join us, the farther we are separated the better."

This was said gravely, and it caused all who heard it fully to appreciate the serious character of a quarrel that threatened to arm brother against brother. As if by common consent, the discourse changed, all appearing anxious, at a moment otherwise so happy, to obliterate impressions so unpleasant from their thoughts.

The captain, his wife, Beulah, and the colonel had several long and private communications in the course of the evening. Maud was not sorry to be left to herself, and

the chaplain devoted his time to the entertainment of the friend of Beekman, who was in truth a surveyor, brought along partly to preserve appearances, and partly for service. The chain-bearers, hunters, etc, had been distributed in the different cabins of the settlement, immediately on the arrival of the party.

That night, when the sisters retired, Maud perceived that Beulah had something to communicate out of the common way. Still, she did not know whether it would be proper for her to make any inquiries, and things were permitted to take their natural course. At length Beulah, in her gentle way, remarked, —

"It is a fearful thing, Maud, for a woman to take upon herself the new duties, obligations, and ties of a wife."

"She should not do it, Beulah, unless she feels a love for the man of her choice, that will sustain her in them. You, who have real parents living, ought to feel this fully, as I doubt not you do."

"Real parents! Maud, you frighten me! Are not my parents yours? Is not all our love common?"

"I am ashamed of myself, Beulah. Dearer and better parents than mine, no girl ever had. I am ashamed of my words, and beg you will forget them."

"That I shall be very ready to do. It was a great consolation to think that should I be compelled to quit home, as compelled I must be in the end, I should leave with my father and mother a child as dutiful, and one that loves them as sincerely as yourself, Maud."

"You have thought right, Beulah. I do love them to my heart's core! Then you are right in another sense, for I shall never marry. My mind is made up to that."

"Well, dear, many are happy that never marry — many women are happier than those that do. Evert has a kind, manly, affectionate heart, and I know will do all he can to prevent my regretting home; but we can never have more than one mother, Maud!"

Maud did not answer, though she looked surprised that Beulah should say this to her.

"Evert has reasoned and talked so much to my father and mother," continued the *fiancée*, blushing, "that they have thought we had better be married at once. Do you know, Maud, that it has been settled this evening that the ceremony is to take place to-morrow!"

"This is sudden, indeed, Beulah! Why have they determined on so unexpected a thing?"

"It is all owing to the state of the country. I know not how he has done it; but Evert has persuaded my father that the sooner I am his wife the more secure we shall all be, here at the Knoll."

"I hope you love Evert Beekman, dearest, dearest Beulah?"

"What a question, Maud! Do you suppose I could stand up before a minister of God and plight my faith to a man I did not love? Why have you seemed to doubt it?"

"I do not doubt it. I am very foolish, for I know you are conscientious as the saints in heaven; and yet, Beulah, I think I could scarce be so tranquil about one I loved."

The gentle Beulah smiled, but she no longer felt uneasiness. She understood the impulses and sentiments of her own pure but tranquil nature too well to distrust herself; and she could easily imagine that Maud would not be as composed under similar circumstances.

"Perhaps it is well, sister of mine," she answered, laughing, though blushing, "that you are so resolved to remain single; for one hardly knows where to find a suitor sufficiently devoted and ethereal for your taste. No one pleased you last winter, though the least encouragement would have brought a dozen to your feet; and here there is no one you can possibly have, unless it be dear, good, old Mr. Woods."

Maud compressed her lips, and really looked stern, so determined was she to command herself; then she answered somewhat in her sister's vein: —

"It is very true," she said, "there is no hero for me to accept, unless it be dear Mr. Woods; and he, poor man, has

had one wife that cured him of any desire to possess another, they say."

"Mr. Woods! I never knew that he was married. Who can have told you this, Maud?"

"I got it from Robert," answered the other, hesitating a little. "He was talking one day of such things."

"What things, dear?"

"Why — of getting married — I believe it was about marrying relatives — or connections — or some such thing; for Mr. Woods married a cousin-german, it would seem — and so he told me all about it. Bob was old enough to know his wife when she died. Poor man, she led him a hard life — he must be far from the Knoll by this time, Beulah!"

"Mr. Woods! I left him with papa a few minutes since, talking over the ceremony for to-morrow!"

"I meant Bob" —

Here the sisters caught each other's eyes, and both blushed, consciousness presenting to them, at the same instant, the images that were uppermost in their respective minds. But no more was said. They continued their employments in silence, and soon each was kneeling in prayer.

The following day Evert Beekman and Beulah Willoughby were married. The ceremony took place, immediately after breakfast, in the little chapel; no one being present but the relatives, and Michael O'Hearn, who quieted his conscience for not worshipping with the rest of the people, by acting as their sexton. The honest county Leitrim-man was let into the secret — as a great secret, however — at early dawn; and he had the place swept and in order in good season, appearing in his Sunday attire to do honor to the occasion, as he thought became him.

A mother as tender as Mrs. Willoughby could not resign the first claim on her child without indulging her tears. Maud wept too, but it was as much in sympathy for Beulah's happiness as from any other cause. The marriage, in other respects, was simple, and without any ostentatious manifestations of feeling. It was, in truth, one of those

rational and wise connections which promise to wear well, there being a perfect fitness, in station, wealth, connections, years, manners, and habits, between the parties. Violence was done to nothing in bringing this discreet and well-principled couple together. Evert was as worthy of Beulah as she was worthy of him. There was confidence in the future on every side; and not a doubt or a misgiving of any sort mingled with the regrets, if regrets they could be called, that were in some measure inseparable from the solemn ceremony.

The marriage was completed, the affectionate father had held the weeping but smiling bride on his bosom, the tender mother had folded her to her breast, Maud had pressed her in her arms in a fervent embrace, and the chaplain had claimed his kiss, when the well-meaning sexton approached.

"Is it the likes of yees I wish well to!" said Mike; "ye may well say that; and to yer husband, and childer, and all that will go before, and all that have come afther ye! I knowed ye when ye was mighty little, and that was years agone; and niver have I seen a cross look on yer pretthy face. I've app'inted to myself, many's the time, a consait to tell ye all this by wor-r-d of mouth; but the likes of yees, and of the missus, and of Miss Maud there — och! isn't she a swate one! and many's the pity there's no sich tall, handsome jontleman to take her in the bargain, bad luck to him for staying away; and so God bless ye all, praist in the bargain, though he's no praist at all; and there's my good wishes said and done."

CHAPTER X.

Ho! Princes of Jacob! the strength and the stay
Of the daughters of Zion, — now up, and away:
Lo, the hunters have struck her, and bleeding alone
Like the pard in the desert she maketh her moan:
Up with war-horse and banner, with spear and with sword,
On the spoiler go down in the might of the Lord.

LUNT.

THE succeeding fortnight or three weeks brought no material changes beyond those connected with the progress of the season. Vegetation was out in its richest luxuriance, the rows of corn and potatoes, freshly hoed, were ornamenting the flats, the wheat and other grains were throwing up their heads, and the meadows were beginning to exchange their flowers for the seed. As for the forest, it had now veiled its mysteries beneath broad curtains of a green so bright and lively, that one can only meet it beneath a generous sun, tempered by genial rains and a mountain air. The chain-bearers and other companions of Beekman quitted the valley the day after the wedding, leaving no one of their party behind but its principal.

The absence of the major was not noted by Joel and his set, in the excitement of receiving so many guests, and in the movement of the wedding. But as soon as the fact was ascertained, the overseer and miller made the pretense of a "slack-time" in their work, and obtained permission to go to the Mohawk on private concerns of their own. Such journeys were sufficiently common to obviate suspicion; and the leave had, the two conspirators started off in company the morning of the second day, or forty-eight hours after the major and Nick had disappeared. As the latter was known to have come in by the Fort Stanwix route, it was naturally enough supposed that he had returned by the same, and Joel determined to head him on the Mohawk at

some point near Schenectady, where he might make a merit of his own patriotism, by betraying the son of his master. The reader is not to suppose Joel intended to do all this openly; so far from it, his plan was to keep himself in the background, while he attracted attention to the supposed toryism of the captain, and illustrated his own attachment to the colonies.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this plan failed, in consequence of the new path taken by Nick. At the very moment when Joel and the miller were lounging about a Dutch inn, some fifteen or twenty miles above Schenectady, in waiting for the travellers to descend the valley of the Mohawk, Robert Willoughby and his guide were actually crossing the Hudson in momentary security at least. After remaining at his post until satisfied his intended prey had escaped him, Joel, with his friend, returned to the settlement. Still the opportunity had been improved, to make himself better acquainted with the real state of the country; to open communications with certain patriots of a moral calibre about equal to his own, but of greater influence; to throw out divers injurious hints and secret insinuations concerning the captain; and to speculate on the propriety of leaving so important a person to work his will, at a time so critical. But the pear was not yet ripe, and all that could now be done was to clear the way a little for something important in future.

In the mean time Evert Beekman, having secured his gentle and true-hearted wife, began, though with a heavy heart, to bethink him of his great political duties. It was well understood that he was to have a regiment of the new levies, and Beulah had schooled her affectionate heart to a degree that permitted her to part with him, in such a cause, with seeming resignation. It was, sooth to say, a curious spectacle, to see how these two sisters bent all their thoughts and wishes, in matters of a public nature, to favor the engrossing sentiments of their sex and natures; Maud being strongly disposed to sustain the royal cause, and the bride to support that in which her husband had enlisted, heart and hand.

As for Captain Willoughby, he said little on the subject of politics; but the marriage of Beulah had a powerful influence in confirming his mind in the direction it had taken after the memorable argument with the chaplain. Colonel Beekman was a man of strong good sense, though without the least brilliancy; and his arguments were all so clear and practical as to carry with them far more weight than was usual in the violent partisan discussions of the period. Beulah fancied him a Solon in sagacity, and a Bacon in wisdom. Her father, without proceeding quite as far as this, was well pleased with his cool, discriminating judgment, and much disposed to defer to his opinions. The chaplain was left out of the discussions as incorrigible.

The middle of June was past at the time Colonel Beekman began to think of tearing himself from his wife, in order to return into the active scenes of preparation he had quitted, to make this visit. As usual, the family frequented the lawn at the close of the day, the circumstance of most of the windows of the Hut looking on the court, rendering this resort to the open air more agreeable than might otherwise have been the case. Evert was undecided whether to go the following morning or to remain a day longer, when the lawn was thus occupied on the evening of the 25th of the month, Mrs. Willoughby making the tea as usual, her daughters sitting near her, sewing, and the gentlemen at hand, discussing the virtues of different sorts of seed-corn.

"There is a stranger!" suddenly exclaimed the chaplain, looking towards the rocks near the mill, the point at which all arrivals in the valley were first seen from the Hut. "He comes, too, like a man in haste, whatever may be his errand."

"God be praised," returned the captain, rising; "it is Nick, on his usual trot, and this is about the time he should be back, the bearer of good news. A week earlier might have augured better, but this will do. The fellow moves over the ground as if he really had something to communicate!"

Mrs. Willoughby and her daughters suspended their avo-

cations, and the gentlemen stood in silent expectation, watching the long, loping strides of the Tuscarora, as he came rapidly across the plain. In a few minutes the Indian came upon the lawn, perfectly in wind, moving with deliberation and gravity, as he drew nearer to the party. Captain Willoughby, knowing his man, waited quite another minute after the red-man was leaning against an apple-tree, before he questioned him.

"Welcome back, Nick," he then said. "Where did you leave my son?"

"He tell dere," answered the Indian, presenting a note, which the captain read.

"This is all right, Nick; and it shows you have been a true man. Your wages shall be paid to-night. But this letter has been written on the eastern bank of the Hudson, and is quite three weeks old — why have we not seen you sooner?"

"Can't see, when he don't come."

"That is plain enough; but why have you not come back sooner? That is my question."

"Want to look at country — went to shore of Great Salt Lake."

"Oh! — curiosity, then, has been at the bottom of your absence?"

"Nick warrior — no squaw — got no cur'osity."

"No, no — I beg your pardon, Nick; I did not mean to accuse you of so womanish a feeling. Far from it; I know you are a man. Tell us, however, how far, and whither you went?"

"Bos'on," answered Nick, sententiously.

"Boston! That has been a journey, indeed. Surely my son did not allow you to travel in his company through Massachusetts?"

"Nick go alone. Two path; one for major; one for Tuscarora. Nick got dere first."

"That I can believe, if you were in earnest. Were you not questioned by the way?"

"Yes. Tell 'em I'm Stockbridge — pale-face know no better. T'ink he fox; more like woodchuck."

"Thank you, Nick, for the compliment. Had my son reached Boston before you came away?"

"Here he be," answered the Indian, producing another missive from the folds of his calico shirt.

The captain received the note, which he read with extreme gravity, and some surprise.

"This is in Bob's handwriting," he said, "and is dated 'Boston, June 18th, 1775;' but it is without signature, and is not only Bob, but Bob Short."

"Read, dear Willoughby," exclaimed the anxious mother. "News from him concerns us all."

"News, Wilhelmina! They may call this news in Boston, but one is very little the better for it at the Hutted Knoll. However, such as it is, there is no reason for keeping it a secret, while there is one reason, at least, why it should be known. This is all. 'My dearest sir, — Thank God I am unharmed; but we have had much to make us reflect; you know what duty requires — my best and endless love to my mother, and Beulah — and dear, laughing, capricious, pretty Maud. Nick was present, and can tell you all. I do not think he will "extenuate, or aught set down in malice."' And this without direction or signature; with nothing, in fact, but place and date. What say you to all this, Nick?"

"He very good — major dere; he know. Nick dere — hot time — a t'ousand scalp — coat red as blood."

"There has been another battle!" exclaimed the captain; "that is too plain to admit of dispute. Speak out at once, Nick — which gained the day; the British or the Americans?"

"Hard to tell — one fight, t'other fight. Red-coat take de ground; Yankee kill. If Yankee could take scalp of all he kill, he whip. But, poor warriors at takin' scalp. No know how."

"Upon my word, Woods, there does seem to be something in all this! It can hardly be possible that the Americans would dare to attack Boston, defended as it is by a strong army of British regulars."

"That would they not," cried the chaplain, with emphasis. "This has been only another skirmish."

"What you call skirmge?" asked Nick, pointedly "It skirmge to take t'ousand scalp, ha?"

"Tell us what has happened, Tuscarora," said the captain, motioning his friend to be silent.

"Soon tell — soon done. Yankee on hill; reg'lar in canoe. Hundred, t'ousand, fifty canoe — full of red-coat. Great chief, dere! — ten — six — two — all go togeder. Come ashore — parade, pale-face manner — march — booh — booh — dem cannon; pop, pop — dem gun. Wah! how he run!"

"Run! — who ran, Nick? Though I suppose it must have been the poor Americans, of course."

"Red-coat run," answered the Indian, quietly.

This reply produced a general sensation, even the ladies starting, and gazing at each other.

"Red-coat run!" repeated the captain, slowly. "Go on with your history, Nick; where was this battle fought?"

"T'other Bos'on — over river — go in canoe to fight, like Injin from Canada."

"That must have been in Charlestown, Woods — you may remember Boston is on one peninsula and Charlestown on another. Still I do not recollect that the Americans were in the latter, Beekman; you told me nothing of that?"

"They were not so near the royal forces, certainly, when I left Albany, sir," returned the colonel. "A few direct questions to the Indian, however, would bring out the whole truth."

"We must proceed more methodically. How many Yankees were in this fight, Nick? Calculate as we used to in the French war."

"Reach from here to mill — t'ree, two deep, cap'in. All farmer — no sodger. Carry gun, but no carry baggonet; no carry knapsack; no wear red-coat. Look like town-meetin'; fight like devils."

"A line as long as from this to the mill, three deep, would contain about two thousand men, Beekman. Is that what you wish to say, Nick?"

"That about him — pretty near — just so."

"Well, then, there were about two thousand Yankees on this hill — how many king's troops crossed in the canoes to go against them?"

"Two time — one time, so many; t'other time, half so many. Nick close by; count him."

"That would make three thousand in all! By George, this does look like work. Did they all go together, Nick?"

"No; one time go first; fight, run away. Den two time go, fight good deal — run away, too. Den try harder — set fire to wigwam — go up hill; Yankee run away."

"This is plain enough, and quite graphical. Wigwam on fire? Charlestown is not burnt, Nick?"

"Dat he — look like old council fire gone out. Big canoe fire — booh — booh; Nick nebber see such war before — wah! Dead man plenty as leaves on tree; blood run like creek!"

"Were you in this battle, Nick? How came you to learn so much about it?"

"Don't want to be in it — better out — no scalp taken. Red-man not'in to do dere. How know about him? See him; dat all. Got eye; why no see him behind stone wall? Good see behind stone wall."

"Were you across the water yourself, or did you remain in Boston, and see from a distance?"

"Across in canoe; tell red-coat general send letter by Nick; major say he my friend — let Nick go."

"My son was in this bloody battle then!" said Mrs. Willoughby. "He writes, Hugh, that he is safe?"

"He does, dearest Wilhelmina; and Bob knows us too well to attempt deception in such a matter."

"Did you see the major in the field, Nick — after you crossed the water, I mean?"

"See him, all. Six — two — seven t'ousand. Close by. Why not see major stand up like pine — no dodge he head dere. Kill all round him — no hurt him! Fool to stay dere — tell him so; but he no come away. Save he scalp, too."

"And how many slain do you suppose there might

have been left on the ground — or did you not remain to see?"

"Did see; stay to get gun, knapsack, oder good t'ing — plenty about; pick him up fast as want him." Here Nick coolly opened a small bundle, and exhibited an epaulette, several rings, a watch, five or six pairs of silver buckles, and divers other articles of plunder, of which he had managed to strip the dead. "All good t'ing — plenty as stone — have him widout askin'."

"So I see, Master Nick; and is this the plunder of Englishmen or of Americans?"

"Red-coat nearest — got most t'ing, too. Go farder, fare worse, as pale-face say."

"Quite satisfactory. Were there more red coats left on the ground, or more Americans?"

"Red-coat, so," said Nick, holding up four fingers — "Yankee, so," holding up one. "Take big grave to hold red-coat; small grave won't hold Yankee. Hear what he count; most red-coat. More than t'ousand warrior. British groan like squaw dat lose her hunter."

Such was Saucy Nick's description of the celebrated, and in some particulars unrivaled combat of Bunker Hill, of which he had actually been an eye-witness on the ground, though using the precaution to keep his body well covered. He did not think it necessary to state the fact that he had given the *coup-de-grace* himself to the owner of the epaulette, nor did he deem it essential to furnish all the particulars of his mode of obtaining so many buckles. In other respects his account was fair enough, "nothing extenuating, or setting down aught in malice." The auditors had listened with intense feeling; and Maud, when the allusion was made to Robert Willoughby, buried her pallid face in her hands, and wept. As for Beulah, time and again she glanced anxiously at her husband, and bethought her of the danger to which he might so soon be exposed.

The receipt of this important intelligence confirmed Beekman in the intention to depart. The very next morning he tore himself away from Beulah, and proceeded to Albany The appointment of Washington and a long list of other

officers soon succeeded, including his own as a colonel, and the war may be said to have commenced systematically. Its distant din occasionally reached the Hutted Knoll; but the summer passed away, bringing with it no event to affect the tranquillity of that settlement. Even Joel's schemes were thwarted for a time, and he was fain to continue to wear the mask, and to gather that harvest for another, which he had hoped to reap for his own benefit.

Beulah had all a young wife's fears for her husband; but as month succeeded month, and one affair followed another, without bringing him harm, she began to submit to the anxieties inseparable from her situation, with less of self-torment, and more of reason. Her mother and Maud were invaluable friends to her, in this novel and trying situation, though each had her own engrossing cares on account of Robert Willoughby. As no other great battle, however, occurred in the course of the year '75, Beekman remained in safety with the troops that invested Boston, and the major with the army within it. Neither was much exposed, and glad enough were these gentle, affectionate hearts, when they learned that the sea separated the combatants.

This did not occur, however, until another winter was passed. In November the family left the Hut, as had been its practice of late years, and went out into the more inhabited districts to pass the winter. This time it came only to Albany, where Colonel Beekman joined it, passing a few happy weeks with his well beloved Beulah. The ancient town mentioned was not gay at a moment like that; but it had many young officers in it, on the American side of the question, who were willing enough to make themselves acceptable to Maud. The captain was not sorry to see several of these youths manifesting assiduity about her he had so long been accustomed to consider as his youngest daughter; for by this time his opinions had taken so strong a bias in favor of the rights of the colonies, that Beekman himself scarce rejoiced more whenever he heard of any little success alighting on the American arms.

"It will all come right in the end," the worthy captain used to assure his friend the chaplain. "They will open

their eyes at home, ere long, and the injustice of taxing the colonies will be admitted. Then all will come round again, the king will be as much beloved as ever, and England and America will be all the better friends for having a mutual respect. I know my countrymen well; they mean right, and will do right as soon as their stomachs are a little lowered, and they come to look at the truth coolly. I'll answer for it, the Battle of Bunker's Hill made us" — the captain had spoken in this way, now, for some months — "made us a thousand advocates where we had one before. This is the nature of John Bull; give him reason to respect you, and he will soon do you justice, but give him reason to feel otherwise, and he becomes a careless, if not a hard master."

Such were the opinions Captain Willoughby entertained of his native land; a land he had not seen in thirty years, and one in which he had so recently inherited unexpected honors, without awakening a desire to return and enjoy them. His opinions were right in part, certainly; for they depended on a law of nature, while it is not improbable they were wrong in all that was connected with the notions of any peculiarly manly quality in any particular part of Christendom. No maxim is truer than that which teaches us, "Like causes produce like effects;" and as human beings are governed by very similar laws all over the face of this round world of ours, nothing is more certain than the similarity of their propensities.

Maud had no smiles beyond those extracted by her naturally sweet disposition, and a very prevalent desire to oblige, for any of the young soldiers or young civilians who crowded about her chair, during the Albany winter mentioned. Two or three of Colonel Beekman's military friends, in particular, would very gladly have become connected with an officer so much respected, through means so exceedingly agreeable; but no encouragement emboldened either to go beyond the attention and assiduities of a marked politeness.

"I know not how it is," observed Mrs. Willoughby, one day, in a *tête-à-tête* with her husband; "Maud seems to take less pleasure than is usual with girls of her years in

the attentions of your sex. That her heart is affectionate, warm, even tender, I am very certain; and yet no sign of preference, partiality, or weakness, in favor of any of these fine young men, of whom we see so many, can I discover in the child. They all seem alike to her!"

"Her time will come, as it happened to her mother before her," answered the captain. "Whooping-cough and measles are not more certain to befall children than love to befall a young woman. You were all made for it, my dear Willy, and no fear but the girl will catch the disease one of these days; and that too, without any inoculation."

"I am sure I have no wish to separate from my child" — so Mrs. Willoughby always spoke of, and so she always felt towards Maud — "I am sure I have no wish to separate from my child; but as we cannot always remain, it is perhaps better this one should marry, like the other. There is young Verplanck, much devoted to her; he is every way a suitable match, and then he is in Evert's own regiment."

"Aye, he would do; though, to my fancy, Luke Herring is the far better match."

"That is because he is richer and more powerful. Hugh, you men cannot think of a daughter's establishment, without immediately dragging in houses and lands as part of the ceremony."

"By George, wife of mine, houses and lands in moderation are very good sweeteners of matrimony!"

"And yet, Hugh, I have been very happy as a wife, nor have you been very miserable as a husband, without any excess of riches to sweeten the state!" answered Mrs. Willoughby, reproachfully. "Had you been a full general I could not have loved you more than I have done as a mere captain."

"All very true, Wilhelmina, dearest," returned the husband, kissing the faithful partner of his bosom with strong affection, "very true, my dear girl; for girl you are, and ever will be in my eyes; but you are one in a million, and I humbly trust there are not ten hundred and one in every thousand, just like myself. For my part, I wish dear, saucy, capricious little Maud no worse luck in a husband than Luke Herring."

"She will never be his wife; I know her, and my own sex, too well to think it. You are wrong, however, Willoughby, in applying such terms to the child. Maud is not in the least capricious, especially in her affections. See with what truth and faithfulness of sisterly attachment she clings to Bob. I do declare I am often ashamed to feel that even his own mother has less solicitude about him than this dear girl."

"Pooh, Willy; don't be afflicted with the idea that you don't make yourself sufficiently miserable about the boy. Bob will do well enough, and will very likely come out of this affair a lieutenant-colonel. I may live yet to see him a general officer; certainly, if I live to be as old as my grandfather, Sir Thomas. As for Maud, she finds Beulah uneasy about Beekman; and having no husband herself, or any lover that she cares a straw about, why she just falls upon Bob as a *pis-aller*. I'll warrant you she cares no more for him than any of the rest of us — than myself, for instance; though, as an old soldier, I don't scream every time I fancy a gun fired over yonder at Boston."

"I wish it were well over. It is so unnatural for Evert and Robert to be on opposite sides."

"Yes, it is out of the common way, I admit; and yet 'twill all come round, in the long run. This Mr. Washington is a clever fellow, and seems to play his cards with spirit and judgment. He was with us in that awkward affair of Braddock's; and between you and me, Wilhelmina, he covered the regulars, or we should all have laid our bones on that accursed field. I wrote you at the time what I thought of him, and now you see it is all coming to pass."

It was one of the captain's foibles to believe himself a political prophet; and as he had really both written and spoken highly of Washington, at the time mentioned, it had no small influence on his opinions to find himself acting on the same side with this admired favorite. Prophecies often produce their own fulfillment in cases of much greater gravity than this; and it is not surprising that our captain found himself strengthened in his notions by the circumstance.

The winter passed away without any of Maud's suitors

making a visible impression on her heart. In March, the English evacuated Boston, Robert Willoughby sailing with his regiment for Halifax, and thence with the expedition against Charleston, under Sir Henry Clinton. The next month the family returned to the Knoll, where it was thought wiser, and even safer, to be at a moment so critical, than even in a more frequented place. The war proceeded, and, to the captain's great regret, without any very visible approaches towards the reconciliation he had so confidently anticipated. This rather checked his warmth in favor of the colonial cause; for, an Englishman by birth, he was much opposed at bottom to anything like a dissolution of the tie that connected America with the mother country; a political event that now began seriously to be talked of among the initiated.

Desirous of thinking as little as possible of disagreeable things, the worthy owner of the valley busied himself with his crops, his mills, and his improvements. He had intended to commence leasing his wild lands about this time, and to begin a more extended settlement, with an eye to futurity; but the state of the country forbade the execution of the project, and he was fain to limit his efforts by their former boundaries. The geographical position of the valley put it beyond any of the ordinary exactions of military service; and as there was a little doubt thrown around its owner's opinions, partly in consequence of his son's present and his own previous connection with the royal army, and partly on account of Joel's secret machinations, the authorities were well content to let the settlement alone, provided it would take care of itself. Notwithstanding the prominent patriotism of Joel Strides and the miller, they were well satisfied themselves with this state of things, preferring peace and quietness to the more stirring scenes of war. Their schemes, moreover, had met with somewhat of a check, in the feeling of the population of the valley, which, on an occasion calculated to put their attachment to its owner to the proof, had rather shown that they remembered his justice, liberality, and upright conduct, more than exactly comported with their longings. This manifestation of respect was shown at

an election for a representative in a local convention, in which every individual at the Hutted Knoll, who had a voice at all, the two conspirators excepted, had given it in favor of the captain. So decided was this expression of feeling, indeed, that it compelled Joel and the miller to chime in with the cry of the hour, and to vote contrary to their own wishes.

One dwelling at the Hutted Knoll in the summer of 1776, could never have imagined that he was resident of a country convulsed by a revolution, and disfigured by war. There everything seemed peaceful and calm — the woods sighing with the airs of their sublime solitude; the genial sun shedding its heats on a grateful and generous soil; vegetation ripening and yielding with all the abundance of a bountiful nature, as in the more tranquil days of peace and hope.

"There is something frightful in the calm of this valley, Beulah!" exclaimed Maud, one Sunday, as she and her sister looked out of the library window, amid the breathing stillness of the forest, listening to the melancholy sound of the bell that summoned them to prayers. "There is a frightful calm over this place, at an hour when we know that strife and bloodshed are so active in the country. Oh! that the hateful Congress had never thought of making this war!"

"Evert writes me all is well, Maud; that the times will lead to good; the people are right, and America will now be a nation, in time, he thinks; a great, and a very great nation."

"Ah! it is this ambition of greatness that hurries them all on! Why can they not be satisfied with being respectable subjects of so great a country as England, that they must destroy each other for this phantom of liberty? Will it make them wiser, or happier, or better than they are?"

Thus reasoned Maud, under the influence of one engrossing sentiment. As our tale proceeds we shall have occasion to show, perhaps, how far was that submission to events which she inculcated from the impulses of her true character

Beulah answered mildly, but it was more as a young American wife: —

"I know Evert thinks it all right, Maud; and you will own he is neither fiery nor impetuous. If his cool judgment approve of what has been done, we may well suppose that it has not been done in too much haste, or needlessly."

"Think, Beulah," rejoined Maud, with an ashen cheek and in trembling tones, "that Evert and Robert may, at this very moment, be engaged in strife against each other. The last messenger who came in brought us the miserable tidings that Sir William Howe was landing a large army near New York, and that the Americans were preparing to meet it. We are certain that Bob is with his regiment; and his regiment we know is in the army. How can we think of this liberty at a moment so critical?"

Beulah did not reply; for in spite of her quiet nature, and implicit confidence in her husband, she could not escape a woman's solicitude. The colonel had promised to write at every good occasion, and that which he promised was usually performed. She thought, and thought rightly, that a very few days would bring them intelligence of importance; though it came in a shape she had little anticipated, and by a messenger she had then no desire to see.

In the mean time the season and its labors advanced. August was over, and September with its fruits had succeeded, promising to bring the year round without any new or extraordinary incidents to change the fortunes of the inmates of the Hutted Knoll. Beulah had now been married more than a twelvemonth, and was already a mother; and of course all that time had elapsed since the son quitted his father's house. Nick, too, had disappeared shortly after his return from Boston; and throughout this eventful summer, his dark, red countenance had not been seen in the valley.

CHAPTER XI.

And now 'tis still! no sound to wake
The primal forest's awful shade:
And breathless lies the covert brake,
Where many an ambushed form is laid:
I see the red-man's gleaming eye,
Yet all so hushed, the gloom profound,
That summer birds flit heedlessly,
And mocking nature smiles around.

LUNT.

THE eventful summer of 1776 had been genial and gen erous in the valley of the Hutted Knoll. With a desire t drive away obtrusive thoughts, the captain had been much i his fields, and he was bethinking himself of making a larg contribution to the good cause in the way of fatted porkers of which he had an unusual number, that he thought migh yet be driven through the forest to Fort Stanwix before th season closed. In the way of intelligence from the seat of war, nothing had reached the family but a letter from the major, which he had managed to get sent, and in which he wrote with necessary caution. He merely mentioned the arrival of Sir William Howe's forces, and the state of his own health. There was a short postscript in the following words, the letter having been directed to his father: "Tell dearest Maud," he said, "that charming women have ceased to charm me; glory occupying so much of my day-dreams, like an *ignis fatuus*, I fear; and that as for love, all my affections are centered in the dear objects at the Hutted Knoll. If I had met with a single woman I admired half as much as I do her pretty self, I should have been married long since." This was written in answer to some thoughtless rattle that the captain had volunteered to put in his last letter, as coming from Maud, who had sensitively shrunk from sending a message when asked; and it was read by

father, mother, and Beulah, as the badinage of a brother to a sister, without awaking a second thought in either. Not so with Maud herself, however. When her seniors had done with this letter, she carried it to her own room, reading and re-reading it a dozen times; nor could she muster resolution to return it; but, finding at length that the epistle was forgotten, she succeeded in retaining it without awakening attention to what she had done. This letter now became her constant companion, and a hundred times did the sweet girl trace its characters, in the privacy of her chamber, or in that of her now solitary walks in the woods.

As yet, the war had produced none of those scenes of ruthless frontier violence that had distinguished all the previous conflicts of America. The enemy was on the coast, and thither the efforts of the combatants had been principally directed. It is true, an attempt on Canada had been made, but it failed for want of means; neither party being in a condition to effect much, as yet, in that quarter. The captain had commented on this peculiarity of the present struggle; all those which had preceded it having, as a matter of course, taken the direction of the frontiers between the hostile provinces.

"There is no use, Woods, in bothering ourselves about these things, after all," observed Captain Willoughby one day, when the subject of hanging the long-neglected gates came up between them. "It's a heavy job, and the crops will suffer if we take off the hands this week. We are as safe here as we should be in Hyde Park; and safer too; for there housebreakers and footpads abound; whereas, your preaching has left nothing but very vulgar and every-day sinners at the Knoll."

The chaplain had little to say against this reasoning; for to own the truth, he saw no particular cause for apprehension. Impunity had produced the feeling of security, until these gates had got to be rather a subject of amusement than of any serious discussion. The preceding year, when the stockade was erected, Joel had managed to throw so many obstacles in the way of hanging the gates that the duty was not performed thoughout the whole of

the present summer, the subject having been mentio
but once or twice, and then only to be postponed
more fitting occasion.

As yet no one in the valley knew of the great e
which had taken place in July. A rumor of a desig
declare the provinces independent had reached the
in May; but the major's letter was silent on this im
tant event, and positive information had arrived by
other channel; otherwise, the captain would have rega
the struggle as much more serious than he had ever d
before; and he might have set about raising these
important gates in earnest. As it was, however, th
they stood; each pair leaning against its proper wal
stockade, though those of the latter were so light a
have required but eight or ten men to set them on th
hinges, in a couple of hours at most.

Captain Willoughby still confined his agricultu
schemes to the site of the old Beaver Pond. The area
that was perfectly beautiful, every unsightly object hav
been removed, while the fences and the tillage were fau
lessly neat and regular. Care had been taken, too, to r
der the few small fields around the cabins which skir
this lovely rural scene, worthy of their vicinage. T
stumps had all been dug, the surfaces leveled, and
orchards and gardens were in keeping with the char
that nature had so bountifully scattered about the place.

While, however, all in the shape of tillage was confin
to this one spot, the cattle ranged the forest for mil
Not only was the valley, but the adjacent mountain-sid
were covered with intersecting paths beaten by the her
in the course of years. These paths led to many a gl
or lookout, where Beulah and Maud had long been in t
habit of pursuing their rambles, during the sultry heats
summer. Though so beautiful to the eye, the flats we
not agreeable for walks; and it was but natural for th
lovers of the picturesque to seek the eminences, whe
they could overlook the vast surfaces of leaves that we
spread before them; or to bury themselves in ravines an
glens, within which the rays of the sun scarce penetrate

The paths mentioned led near, or to, a hundred of these places, all within a mile or two of the Hut. As a matter of course, then, they were not neglected.

Beulah had now been a mother several months. Her little Evert was born at the Knoll, and he occupied most of those gentle and affectionate thoughts which were not engrossed by his absent father. Her marriage, of itself, had made some changes in her intercourse with Maud; but the birth of the child had brought about still more. The care of this little being formed Beulah's great delight; and Mrs. Willoughby had all that peculiar interest in her descendant, which marks a grandmother's irresponsible love. These two passed half their time in the nursery, a room fitted between their respective chambers; leaving Maud more alone than it was her wont to be, and of course to brood over her thoughts and feelings. These periods of solitude our heroine was much accustomed to pass in the forest. Use had so far emboldened her, that apprehension never shortened her walks or lessened her pleasure. Of danger from any ordinary source, there was literally next to none, man never having been known to approach the valley unless by the regular path; while the beasts of prey had been so actively hunted, as rarely to be seen in that quarter of the country. The panther excepted, no wild quadruped was to be in the least feared in summer; and of the first, none had ever been met with by Nick, or any of the numerous woodsmen who had now frequented the adjacent hills for two lustrums.

About three hours before the setting of the sun, on the evening of the 23d of September, 1776, Maud Willoughby was pursuing her way quite alone along one of the paths beaten by the cattle, at some little distance from a rocky eminence where there was a lookout, on which Mike, by her father's orders, had made a rude seat. It was on the side of the clearing most remote from all the cabins; though once on the elevation, she could command a view of the whole of the little panorama around the site of the ancient pond. In that day ladies wore the well-known gypsy hat, a style that was peculiarly suited to the face

of our heroine. Exercise had given her cheeks a r glow; and though a shade of sadness, or at least reflection, was now habitually thrown athwart her sw countenance, this bloom added an unusual lustre to eyes, and a brilliancy to her beauty, that the proud *belle* of any drawing-room might have been glad to poss Although living so retired, her dress always became rank; being simple, but of the character that denc refinement, and the habits and tastes of a gentlewom In this particular, Maud had ever been observant of wh was due to herself; and more than all had she atten to her personal appearance since a chance expression Robert Willoughby's had betrayed how much he priz the quality in her.

Looking thus, and in a melancholy frame of mi Maud reached the rock, and took her place on its simp seat, throwing aside her hat to catch a little of the co ing air on her burning cheeks. She turned to look the lovely view again, with a pleasure that never tir The rays of the sun were streaming athwart the verda meadows and rich corn, lengthening the shadows, a mellowing everything, as if expressly to please the eye one like her who now gazed upon the scene. Most the people of the settlement were in the open air, t men closing their day's works in the fields, and the wom and children busied beneath shades, with their wheels a needles; the whole presenting such a picture of peacefu rural life, as a poet might delight to describe, or an artist delineate with his pencil.

> The landscape smiles
> Calm in the sun; and silent are the hills
> And valleys, and the blue serene of air.
>
> THE VANISHED LARK.

"It is very beautiful!" thought Maud. "Why cann men be content with such scenes of loveliness and natu as this, and love each other, and be at peace, as God laws command? Then we might all be living happi together here, without trembling lest news of some sa misfortune should reach us from hour to hour. Beula

and Evert would not be separated, but both could remain with their child; and my dear, dear father and mother would be so happy to have us all around them, in security —and then, Bob, too — perhaps Bob might bring a wife from the town with him, that I could love as I do Beulah." It was one of Maud's day-dreams to love the wife of Bob, and make him happy by contributing to the happiness of those he most prized. "No; I could never love her as I do Beulah; but I should make her very dear to me, as I ought to, since she would be Bob's wife."

The expression of Maud's face towards the close of this mental soliloquy, was of a singular sadness; and yet it was the very picture of sincerity and truth. It was some such look as the windows of the mind assume, when the feelings struggle against nature and hope, for resignation and submission to duty.

At this instant a cry arose from the valley! It was one of those spontaneous, involuntary outbreakings of alarm, that no art can imitate, no pen describe; but which conveys to the listener's ear terror in the very sound. At the next instant, the men from the mill were seen rushing up to the summit of the cliff that impended over their dwellings, followed by their wives, dragging children after them, making frantic gestures, indicative of alarm. The first impulse of Maud was to fly; but a moment's reflection told her it was much too late for that. To remain and witness what followed would be safer and more wise. Her dress was dark, and she would not be likely to be observed at the distance at which she was placed; having behind her, too, a background of gloomy rock. Then the scene was too exciting to admit of much hesitation or delay in coming to a decision; a fearful species of maddened curiosity mingling with her alarm. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that Maud continued gazing on what she saw, with eyes that seemed to devour the objects before them.

The first cry from the valley was followed by the appearance of the fugitives from the mill. These took the way towards the Hut, calling on the nearest laborers by name,

to seek safety in flight. The words could not be distinguished at the rock, though indistinct sounds might; but the gestures could not be mistaken. In half a minute the plain was alive with fugitives; some rushing to their cabins for their children, and all taking the direction of the stockade, as soon as the last were found. In five minutes the roads and lanes near the Knoll were crowded with men, women, and children, hastening forward to its protection. while a few of the former had already rushed through the gateways, as Maud correctly fancied, in quest of their arms.

Captain Willoughby was riding among his laborers when this fearful interruption to a tranquillity so placid first broke upon his ear. Accustomed to alarms, he galloped forward to meet the fugitives from the mill, issuing orders as he passed to several of the men nearest the house. With the miller, who thought little of anything but safety at that instant, he conversed a moment, and then pushed boldly on towards the verge of the cliffs. Maud trembled as she saw her father in a situation which she thought must be so exposed; but his cool manner of riding about proved that he saw no enemy very near. At length he waved his hat to some object or person in the glen beneath; and she even thought she heard his shout. At the next moment he turned his horse, and was seen scouring along the road towards the Hut. The lawn was covered with the fugitives as the captain reached it, while a few armed men were already coming out of the courtyard. Gesticulating as if giving orders, the captain dashed through them all without drawing the rein, and disappeared in the court. A minute later he re-issued, bearing his arms, followed by his wife and Beulah, the latter pressing little Evert to her bosom.

Something like order now began to appear among the men. Counting all ages and both colors, the valley, at this particular moment, could muster thirty-three males capable of bearing arms. To these might be added some ten or fifteen women who had occasionally brought down a deer, and who might be thought more or less dangerous,

stationed at a loop with a rifle or a musket. Captain Willoughby had taken some pains to drill the former, who could go through some of the simpler light-infantry evolutions. Among them he appointed sundry corporals, while Joel Strides had been named a sergeant. Joyce, now an aged and war-worn veteran, did the duty of adjutant. Twenty men were soon drawn up in array, in front of the open gateway on the lawn, under the immediate orders of Joyce; and the last woman and child that had been seen approaching the place of refuge had passed within the stockade. At this instant Captain Willoughby called a party of the stragglers around him, and set about hanging the gates of the outer passage, or that which led through the palisades.

Maud would now have left the rock, but at that moment a dark body of Indians poured up over the cliffs, crowning it with a menacing cloud of at least fifty armed warriors. The rivulet lay between her and the Hut, and the nearest bridge that crossed it would have brought her within reach of danger. Then it would require at least half an hour to reach that bridge by the circuitous path she would be compelled to take, and there was little hope of getting over it before the strangers should have advanced. It was better to remain where she could behold what was passing, and to be governed by events, than to rush blindly into unseen risks.

The party that crowned the cliffs near the mills showed no impatience to advance. It was evidently busy in reconnoitering, and in receiving accessions to its numbers. The latter soon increased to some seventy or eighty warriors. After waiting several minutes in inaction, a musket, or rifle, was fired towards the Hut, as if to try the effect of a summons and the range of a bullet. At this hint the men on the lawn retired within the stockade, stacked their arms, and joined the party that was endeavoring to get the gates in their places. From the circumstance that her father directed all the women and children to retire within the court, Maud supposed that the bullet might have fallen somewhere near them. It was quite evident, however, that no one was injured.

The gates intended for the stockade, being open like the rest of that work, were materially lighter than those constructed for the house itself. The difficulty was in handling them with the accuracy required to enter the hinges, of which there were three pairs. This difficulty existed on account of their great height. Of physical force, enough could be applied to toss them over the stockade itself, if necessary; but finesse was needed, rather than force, to effect the principal object, and that under difficult circumstances. It was scarcely possible that the proximity of so fierce an enemy as a body of savages in their war-paint, for such the men at the mill had discovered was the guise of their assailants, would in any measure favor the coolness and tact of the laborers. Poor Maud lost the sense of her own danger, in the nervous desire to see the long-forgotten gates hung; and she rose once or twice, in feverish excitement, as she saw that the leaf which was raised fell in or out, missing its fastenings. Still the men persevered, one or two sentinels being placed to watch the Indians, and give timely notice of their approach, should they advance.

Maud now kneeled, with her face bowed to the seat, and uttered a short but most fervent prayer, in behalf of the dear beings that the Hut contained. This calmed her spirits a little, and she rose once more to watch the course of events. The body of men had left the gate at which they had just been toiling, and were crowding around its fellow. One leaf was hung! As an assurance of this, she soon after saw her father swing it backwards and forwards on its hinges, to cause it to settle into its place. This was an immense relief, though she had heard too many tales of Indian warfare, to think there was any imminent danger of an attack by open day, in the very face of the garrison. The cool manner in which her father proceeded, satisfied her that he felt the same security for the moment; his great object being, in truth, to make suitable provision against the hours of darkness.

Although Maud had been educated as a lady, and possessed the delicacy and refinement of her class, she had unavoidably caught some of the fire and resolution of a frontier

life. To her, the forest, for instance, possessed no fancied dangers; but when there was real ground for alarm, she estimated its causes intelligently, and with calmness. So it was, also, in the present crisis. She remembered all she had been taught or had heard, and quick of apprehension, her information was justly applied to the estimate of present circumstances.

The men at the Hut soon had the second leaf of the gate ready to be raised. At this instant, an Indian advanced across the flat alone, bearing a branch of a tree in his hand, and moving swiftly. This was a flag of truce, desiring to communicate with the pale-faces. Captain Willoughby met the messenger alone, at the foot of the lawn, and there a conference took place that lasted several minutes. Maud could only conjecture its objects, though she thought her father's attitude commanding, and his gesture stern. The red-man, as usual, was quiet and dignified. This much our heroine saw, or fancied she saw; but beyond this, of course, all was vague conjecture. Just as the two were about to part, and had even made courteous signs of their intention, a shout arose from the workmen, which ascended, though faintly, as high as the rock. Captain Willoughby turned, and then Maud saw his arm extended towards the stockade. The second leaf of the gate was in its place, swinging to and fro, in a sort of exulting demonstration of its uses! The savage moved away more slowly than he had advanced, occasionally stopping to reconnoitre the Knoll and its defenses.

Captain Willoughby now returned to his people, and he was some time busied in examining the gates, and giving directions about their fastenings. Utterly forgetful of her own situation, Maud shed tears of joy as she saw that this great object was successfully effected. The stockade was an immense security to the people of the Hut. Although it certainly might be scaled, such an enterprise would require great caution, courage, and address; and it could hardly be effected at all by daylight. At night, even, it would allow the sentinels time to give the alarm, and with a vigilant lookout, might be the means of repelling an

enemy. There was also another consideration connected with this stockade. An enemy would not be fond of trusting himself inside of it, unless reasonably certain of carrying the citadel altogether; inasmuch as it might serve as a prison to place him in the hands of the garrison. To recross it under a fire from the loops, would be an exploit so hazardous that few Indians would think of undertaking it. All this Maud knew from her father's conversations, and she saw how much had been obtained in raising the gates. Then the stockade, once properly closed, afforded great security to those moving about within it; the timbers would be apt to stop a bullet, and were a perfect defense against a rush; leaving time to the women and children to get into the court, even allowing that the assailants succeeded in scaling the palisades.

Maud thought rapidly and well, in the strait in which she was placed. She understood most of the movements on both sides, and she also saw the importance of her remaining where she could note all that passed, if she intended to make an attempt at reaching the Hut after dark. This necessity determined her to continue at the rock so long as light remained. She wondered she was not missed, but rightly attributed the circumstance to the suddenness of the alarm, and the crowd of other thoughts which would naturally press upon the minds of her friends at such a fearful moment. "I will stay where I am," thought Maud, a little proudly, "and prove, if I am not really the daughter of Hugh Willoughby, that I am not altogether unworthy of his love and care! I can even pass the night in the forest, at this warm season, without suffering."

Just as these thoughts crossed her mind in a sort of mental soliloquy, a stone rolled from a path above her, and fell over the rock on which the seat was placed. A footstep was then heard, and the girl's heart beat quick with apprehension. Still she conceived it safest to remain perfectly quiet. She scarce breathed, in her anxiety to be motionless. Then it occurred to her that some one besides herself might be out from the Hut, and that a friend was near. Mike had been in the woods that very afternoon, she knew

for she had seen him; and the true-hearted fellow would indeed be a treasure to her, at that awful moment. This idea, which rose almost to certainty as soon as it occurred, induced her to spring forward, when the appearance of a man whom she did not recognize, dressed in a hunting-shirt, and otherwise attired for the woods, carrying a short rifle in the hollow of his arm, caused her to stop, in motionless terror. At first her presence was not observed; but no sooner did the stranger catch a glimpse of her person than he stopped, raised his hands in surprise, laid his rifle against a tree, and sprang forward; the girl closing her eyes, and sinking on the seat, with bowed head, expecting the blow of the deadly tomahawk.

"Maud — dearest, dearest Maud, do you not know me?" exclaimed one, leaning over the pallid girl, while he passed an arm round her slender waist, with an affection so delicate and reserved, that at another time it might have attracted attention. "Look up, dear girl, and show that at least you fear not me!"

"Bob!" said the half-senseless Maud, "whence come you? Why do you come at this fearful instant? Would to God your visit had been better timed!"

"Terror makes you say this, my poor Maud! Of all the family, I had hoped for the warmest welcome from you. We think alike about this war — then you are not so much terrified at the idea of my being found here, but can hear reason. Why do you say this, then, my dearest Maud?"

By this time Maud had so far recovered as to be able to look up into the major's face, with an expression in which alarm was blended with unutterable tenderness. Still she did not throw her arms around him, as a sister would clasp a beloved brother; but rather, as he pressed her gently to his bosom, repelled the embrace by a slight resistance. Extricating herself, however, she turned and pointed towards the valley.

"Why do I say this? See for yourself — the savages have at length come, and the whole dreadful picture is before you."

Young Willoughby's military eye took in the scene at a

glance. The Indians were still at the cliff, and the people of the settlement were straining at the heavier gates of the Hut, having already got one of them into a position where it wanted only the proper application of a steady force to be hung. He saw his father actively employed in giving directions, and a few pertinent questions drew all the other circumstances from Maud. The enemy had now been in the valley more than an hour, and the movements of the two parties were soon related.

"Are you alone, dearest Maud? are you shut out by this sudden inroad?" demanded the major, with concern and surprise.

"So it would seem. I can see no other — though I did think Michael might be somewhere near me in the woods, here; I at first mistook your footsteps for his."

"That is a mistake," returned Willoughby, leveling a small pocket spy-glass at the Hut; "Mike is tugging at that gate, upholding a part of it, like a corner-stone. I see most of the faces I know there, and my dear father is as active, and yet as cool, as if at the head of a regiment."

"Then I am alone; it is perhaps better that as many as possible should be in the house to defend it."

"Not alone, my sweet Maud, so long as I am with you. Do you still think my visit so ill-timed?"

"Perhaps not, after all. Heaven knows what I should have done by myself when it became dark!"

"But are we safe on this seat? May we not be seen by the Indians, since we so plainly see them?"

"I think not. I have often remarked that when Evert and Beulah have been here, their figures could not be perceived from the lawn, owing, I fancy, to the dark background of rock. My dress is not light, and you are in green, which is the color of the leaves, and not easily to be distinguished. No other spot gives so good a view of what takes place in the valley. We must risk a little exposure, or act in the dark."

"You are a soldier's daughter, Maud." This was as true of Major Meredith as of Captain Willoughby, and might therefore be freely said by even Bob. "You are a soldier's

daughter, and nature has clearly intended you to be a soldier's wife. This is a *coup-d'œil* not to be despised."

"I shall never be a wife at all," murmured Maud, scarce knowing what she said; "I may not live to be a soldier's daughter even much longer. But why are you here? — surely, surely you can have no connection with those savages! I have heard of such horrors; but you would not accompany them, even though it were to protect the Hut."

"I'll not answer for that, Maud. One would do a great deal to preserve his paternal dwelling from pillage, and his father's gray hairs from violence. But I came alone; that party and its objects being utterly strangers to me."

"And why do you come at all, Bob?" inquired the girl, looking up into his face with open affection. "The situation of the country is now such as to make your visits very hazardous."

"Who could know the regular major in this hunting-shirt and forest garb? I have not an article about my person to betray me, even were I before a court. No fear for me, then, Maud; unless it be from these demons in human shape, the savages. Even they do not seem to be very fiercely inclined, as they appear at this moment more disposed to eat than to attack the Hut. Look for yourself; those fellows are certainly preparing to take their food; the group that is just now coming over the cliffs is dragging a deer after it."

Maud took the glass, though with an unsteady hand, and she looked a moment at the savages. The manner in which the instrument brought these wild beings nearer to her eye, caused her to shudder, and she was soon satisfied.

"That deer was killed this morning by the miller," she said; "they have doubtless found it in or near his cabin. We will be thankful, however, for this breathing-time — it may enable my dear father to get up the other gate. Look, Robert, and see what progress they make!"

"One side is just hung, and much joy does it produce among them! Persevere, my noble old father, and you will

soon be safe against your enemies. What a calm and steady air he has, amid it all! Ah! Maud, Hugh Willoughby ought at this moment to be at the head of a brigade, helping to suppress this accursed and unnatural rebellion. Nay, more; he may be there, if he will only listen to reason and duty."

"And this is then your errand here, Bob?" asked his fair companion, gazing earnestly at the major.

"It is, Maud; and I hope you, whose feelings I know to be right, can encourage me to hope."

"I fear not. It is now too late. Beulah's marriage with Evert has strengthened his opinions — and then" —

"What, dearest Maud? You pause as if that 'then' had a meaning you hesitated to express."

Maud colored; after which she smiled faintly, and proceeded: —

"We should speak reverently of a father — and such a father, too. But does it not seem probable to you, Bob, that the many discussions he has had with Mr. Woods may have a tendency to confirm each in his notions?"

Robert Willoughby would have answered in the affirmative, had not a sudden movement at the Hut prevented.

CHAPTER XII.

From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore wood, their evening post,
And heedful watched them as they crossed
The Till by Twisal Bridge.

Scott.

It was just at this instant that most of the women of the settlement rushed from the court, and spread themselves within the stockade, Mrs. Willoughby and Beulah being foremost in the movement. The captain left the gate, too, and even the men, who were just about to raise the last leaf, suspended their toil. It was quite apparent some new cause for uneasiness or alarm had suddenly awoke among them. Still the stack of arms remained untouched, nor was there any new demonstration among the Indians. The major watched everything with intense attention through the glass.

"What is it, dear Bob?" demanded the anxious Maud. "I see my dearest mother — she seems alarmed."

"Was it known to her that you were about to quit the house, when you came out on this walk?"

"I rather think not. She and Beulah were in the nursery with little Evert, and my father was in the fields. I came out without speaking to any person, nor did I meet any before entering the forest."

"Then you are now first missed. Yes, that is it; and no wonder, Maud, it creates alarm. Merciful God! How must they all feel, at a moment like this?"

"Fire your rifle, Bob — that will draw their eyes in this direction; and I will wave my handkerchief — perhaps that might be seen. Beulah has received such signals from me before."

"It would never do. No, we must remain concealed, watching their movements, in order to be able to aid them at the proper time. It is painful to endure this suspense, beyond a doubt; but the pain must be borne in order to insure the safety of one who is so very, very precious to us all."

Notwithstanding the fearful situation in which she was placed, Maud felt soothed by these words. The language of affection, as coming from Robert Willoughby, was very dear to her at all times, and never more than at a moment when it appeared that even her life was suspended, as it might be, by a hair.

"It is as you say," she answered gently, giving him her hand with much of her ancient frankness of manner; "we should be betrayed, and of course lost; but what means the movement at the Hut?"

There was indeed a movement within the stockade. Maud's absence was now already clearly ascertained, and it is needless to describe the commotion the circumstance produced. No one thought any longer of the half of the gate that still remained to be hung, but every supposable part of the house and inclosures had been examined in quest of her who was missing. Our heroine's last remark, however, was produced by certain indications of an intention to make a descent from one of the external windows of the common parlor, a room, it will be remembered, that stood on the little cliff, above the rivulet that wound beneath its base. This cliff was about forty feet high, and though it offered a formidable obstacle to any attempt to scale it, there was no great difficulty in an active man's descending, aided by a rope. The spot, too, was completely concealed from the view of the party which still remained on the rock, near the mill, at a distance of quite half a mile from the gates of the stockade. This fact greatly facilitated the little sortie, since, once in the bed of the rivulet, which was fringed with bushes, it would be very practicable, by following its windings, to gain the forest unseen. The major leveled his glass at the windows, and immediately saw the truth of all that has here been mentioned.

"They are preparing to send a party out," he said, "and doubtless in quest of you, Maud. The thing is very feasible, provided the savages remain much longer in their present position. It is matter of surprise to me, that the last have not sent a force in the rear of the Hut, where the windows are at least exposed to fire, and the forest is so close as to afford a cover to the assailants. In front there is literally none, but a few low fences, which is the reason I presume that they keep so much aloof."

"It is not probable they know the valley. With the exception of Nick, but few Indians have ever visited us, and that rarely. Those we have seen have all been of the most peaceable and friendly tribes; not a true warrior, as my father says, ever having been found among them. Nick is the only one of them all that can thus be termed."

"Is it possible that fellow has led this party? I have never more than half confided in him, and yet he is too old a friend of the family, I should think, to be guilty of such an act of baseness."

"My father thinks him a knave, but I question if he has an opinion of him as bad as that. Besides, he knows the valley, and would have led the Indians around into the rear of the house, if it be a place so much more favorable for the attack, as you suppose. These wretches have come by the common paths, all of which first strike the river, as you know, below the mills."

"That is true. I lost my way, a few miles from this, the path being very blind on the eastern route, which I travelled as having gone it last with Nick, and thinking it the safest. Fortunately I recognized the crest of this mountain above us by its shape, or I might never have found my way; although the streams, when struck, are certain guides to the woodsman. As soon as I hit the cow-paths, I knew they would lead me to the barns and sheds. See! a man is actually descending from a window!"

"Oh! Bob, I hope it is not my father! He is too old — it is risking too much to let him quit the house."

"I will tell you better when he reaches the ground. Unless mistaken — aye — it is the Irishman, O'Hearn."

"Honest Mike! He is always foremost in everything, though he so little knows how anything but digging ought to be done. Is there not another following him, or am I deceived?"

"There is — he has just reached the ground, too. This might be spared, did they know how well you are guarded, Maud. By one who would die cheerfully to prevent harm from reaching you!"

"They little dream of that, Bob," answered Maud, in a low tone. "Not a human being in that valley fancies you nearer to him than the royal armies are at this moment. But they do not send a third — I am glad they weaken their own force no further."

"It is certainly best they should not. The men had their rifles slung when they descended, and they are now getting them ready for service. It is Joel Strides who is with Mike."

"I am sorry for it. That is a man I little like, Bob, and I should be sorry if he knew of your being here."

This was said quickly, and with a degree of feeling that surprised the major, who questioned Maud earnestly as to her meaning and its reasons. The latter told him she scarce knew, herself; that she disliked the man's manner, had long thought his principles bad, and that Mike in his extraordinary way had said certain things to her, to awaken distrust.

"Mike speaks in hieroglyphics," said the major, laughing, in spite of the serious situation in which he and his companion were placed, "and one must never be too sure of his meaning. Joel has now been many years with my father, and he seems to enjoy his confidence."

"He makes himself useful, and is very guarded in what he says at the Hut. Still, I wish him not to know of your being here."

"It will not be easy to prevent it, Maud. I should have come boldly into the valley, but for this accidental meeting with you, trusting that my father has no one about him so base as to betray his son."

"Trust not Joel Strides. I'll answer for Mike with my

life; but sorry indeed should I be that Joel Strides knew of your being among us. It were better, perhaps, that most of the workmen should not be in the secret. See — the two men are quitting the foot of the rocks."

This was true, and Robert Willoughby watched their movements with the glass. As had been expected, they first descended into the bed of the rivulet, wading along its shore, under the cover of the bushes, until they soon became concealed even from the view of one placed on a height as elevated as that occupied by Robert and Maud. It was sufficiently apparent, however, that their intention was to reach the forest in this manner, when they would probably commence their search for the missing young lady. Nor was it long before Robert and Maud plainly saw the two adventurers quit the bed of the stream and bury themselves in the forest. The question now seriously arose as to the best course for the major and his companion to pursue. Under ordinary circumstances, it would have been wisest, perhaps, to descend at once and meet the messengers, who might soon be found at some of the usual haunts of the girl; but against this the latter so earnestly protested, and that in a manner so soothing to the young man's feelings, that he scarce knew how to oppose her wishes. She implored him not to confide in Joel Strides too hastily, at least. It might be time enough, when there was no alternative; until the true character of the party then in the valley was known, it would be premature. Nothing was easier than to conceal himself until it was dark, when he might approach the Hut, and be admitted without his presence being known to any but those on whom the family could certainly rely. The major urged the impossibility of his quitting Maud, until she was joined by the two men sent in quest of her, and then it would be too late, as he must be seen. Although he might escape immediate recognition in his present dress, the presence of a stranger would excite suspicions, and compel an explanation. To this Maud replied in the following manner: Her customary places of resort, when in the woods, were well known; more especially to Michael, who was frequently employed

in their vicinity. These were a little water-fall, that was situated a hundred rods up the rivulet, to which a path had been made expressly, and where an arbor, seat, and little table had been arranged, for the purposes of working, reading, or taking refreshments. To this spot the men would unquestionably proceed first. Then there was a deep ravine, some distance farther, that was often visited for its savage beauty, and whither she more frequently went, perhaps, than to any other place. Thither Michael would be certain to lead his companion. These two places visited, they might infallibly expect to see the men at the rock, where the two were then seated, as the last spot in which Maud might naturally be expected to be found. It would require an hour to visit the two places first named, and to examine the surrounding woods; and by that time, not only would the sun be set, but the twilight would be disappearing. Until that moment, then, the major might remain at her side, and on the sound of the approaching footsteps of the messengers, he had only to retire behind a projection of the rocks, and afterwards follow towards the Knoll at a safe distance.

This plan was too plausible to be rejected; and giving Robert an hour of uninterrupted discourse with his companion, it struck him as having more advantages than any other mentioned. The party near the mills, too, remaining perfectly quiet, there was less occasion for any change of their own, than might otherwise have been the case. So far, indeed, from appearing to entertain any hostile intention, not a cabin had been injured, if approached, and the smoke of the conflagration which had been expected to rise from the mills and the habitations in the glen, did not make its appearance. If any such ruthless acts as applying the brand and assaulting the people were in contemplation, they were at least delayed until night should veil them in a fitting darkness.

It is always a great relief to the mind, in moments of trial, to have decided on a course of future action. So the major and Maud now found; for, taking his seat by her side, he began to converse with his companion more con-

nectedly, and with greater calmness than either had yet been able to achieve. Many questions were asked, and answers given, concerning the state of the family, that of his father and mother, and dear Beulah and her infant, the latter being as yet quite a stranger to the young soldier.

"Is he like his rebel of a father?" asked the royal officer, smiling, but as his companion fancied, painfully; "or has he more of the look of the Willoughbys? Beekman is a good-looking Dutchman; yet I would rather have the boy resemble the good old English stock, after all."

"The sweet little fellow resembles both father and mother; though the first the most, to Beulah's great delight. Papa says he is true 'Holland's come of,' as they call it, though neither mamma nor I will allow of any such thing. Colonel Beekman is a very worthy man, Bob, and a most affectionate and attentive husband. Beulah, but for this war, could not be happier."

"Then I forgive him one half of his treason — for the remainder let him take his luck. Now I am an uncle, my heart begins to melt a little towards the rebel. And you, Maud, how do the honors of an aunt sit upon your feelings? But women are all heart, and would love a rat."

Maud smiled, but she answered not. Though Beulah's child was almost as dear to her as one of her own could have been, she remembered that she was not its aunt in fact; and though she knew not why, in that company, and even at that grave moment, the obtrusive thought summoned a bright flush to her cheeks. The major probably did not notice this change of countenance, since, after a short pause, he continued the conversation naturally.

"The child is called Evert, is it not, aunt Maud?" he asked, laying an emphasis on "aunt."

Maud wished this word had not been used; and yet Robert Willoughby, could the truth have been known, had adverted to it with an association in his own mind that would have distressed her just then still more. Aunt Maud was the name that others, however, were most fond of adopting, since the birth of the child; and remembering this, our heroine smiled.

"That is what Beulah has called me these six months," she said, "or ever since Evert was born. I became an aunt the day he became a nephew; and dear, good Beulah has not once called me sister since, I think."

"These little creatures introduce new ties into families," answered the major, thoughtfully. "They take the places of the generations before them, and edge us out of our hold on the affections, as in the end they supplant us in our stations in life. If Beulah love me only as an uncle, however, she may look to it. I'll be supplanted by no Dutchman's child that was ever born!"

"You, Bob!" cried Maud, starting. "You are its real uncle; Beulah must ever remember you, and love you, as her own brother!"

Maud's voice became suddenly hushed, like one who feared she had said too much. The major gazed at her intently, but he spoke not; nor did his companion see his look, her own eyes being cast meekly and tremblingly on the earth at her feet. A considerable pause succeeded, and then the conversation reverted to what was going on in the valley.

The sun was now set, and the shadows of evening began to render objects a little indistinct beneath them. Still it was apparent that much anxiety prevailed in and about the Hut, doubtless on account of our heroine's absence. So great was it, indeed, as entirely to supersede the hanging of the remaining leaf of the gate, which stood in the gap where it belonged, stayed by pieces of timber, but unhung. The major thought some disposition had been made, however, by which the inmates might pass and repass by the half that was supended, making a tolerable defense, when all was closed.

"Hist!" whispered Maud, whose faculties were quickened by the danger of her companion; "I hear the voice of Michael, and they approach. No sense of danger can repress poor O'Hearn's eloquence; his ideas seeming to flow from his tongue very much as they rise to his thoughts, chance directing which shall appear first."

"It is true, dear girl; and as you seem so strongly to

wish it, I will withdraw. Depend on my keeping near you, and on my presence, should it be required."

"You will not forget to come beneath the windows, Bob," said Maud, anxiously, but in great haste; for the footsteps of the men drew rapidly near; "at the very spot where the others descended."

The major bent forward and kissed a cheek that was chilled with apprehension, but which the act caused to burn like fire; then he disappeared behind the projection of rock he had himself pointed out. As for Maud, she sat in seeming composure, awaiting the approach of those who drew near.

"The divil bur-r-n me, and all the Injins in Ameriky along wid me," said Mike, scrambling up the ascent by a short cut, "but I think we'll find the young missus here, or I don't think we'll be finding her the night. It's a cursed counthry to live in, Misther Strides, where a young lady of the loveliness and pithiful beauty of Miss Maud can be lost in the woods, as it might be a sheep or a stray baste that was for tasting the neighbors' pastures."

"You speak too loud, Mike, and you speak foolishness into the bargain," returned the wary Joel.

"Is it I, you mane! Och! don't think ye're goin' to set me a rowin' a boat once more, agin my inclinations and edication, as ye did in ould times. I've rung ye into yer mate'in', and out of yer mate'in', too, twenty times too often to be catched in that same trap twice. It's Miss Maud I wants, and Miss Maud I'll find, or — Lord bless her swate face and morals, and her char*ac*ter, and all belonging to her! — isn't that, now, a prathy composure for the likes of her, and the savages at the mill, and the missus in tears, and the masther mighty un'asy, and all of us bothered! See how she sits on that bit of a sate that I put there for her wid my own hands, as a laddy should, looking jist what she is, the quane of the woods, and the delight of our eyes!"

Maud was too much accustomed to the rhapsodies of the county Leitrim-man to think much of this commencement; but resolute to act her part with discretion, she rose to meet him, speaking with great apparent self-possession.

"Is it possible you are in quest of me?" she said; "why has this happened? — I usually return about this hour."

"Hoors is it! Don't talk of hoors, beauthiful young laddy, when a single quarther may be too late," answered Mike, dogmatically. "It's your own mother that's not happy at yer being in the woods the night, and yer ould father that has more un'asiness than he'll confess — long life to the church in which confession is held to be right, and dacent, and accorthing to the Gospel of St. Luke, and the whole calendar in the bargain. Ye'll not be frightened, Miss Maud, but take what I've to tell ye jist as if ye didn't belave a wo-r-r-d of it; but, divil bur-r-n me, if there aren't Injins enough on the rocks, forenent the mill, to scalp a whole province, and a county along wid it, if ye'll give 'em time and knives enough."

"I understand you, Michael, but am not in the least alarmed," answered Maud, with an air of great steadiness; such, indeed, as would have delighted the captain. "Something of what has been passing below have I seen; but, by being calm and reasonable, we shall escape the danger. Tell me only that all is safe in the Hut — that my dear mother and sister are well."

"Is it the missus? Och, she's as valiant as a peacock, only strick down and overcome about your own self! As for Miss Beuly, where's the likes of her to be found, unless it's on this same bit of a rock? And it's agreeable to see the captain, looking for all the wor-r-l-d like a commander-in-chaif of six or eight rijiments, ordering one this-away, and another that-away — by St. Patrick, young laddy, I only hopes them vagabonds will come on as soon as yourself is inside the sticks, jist to give the ould jontleman a better occasion to play souldier on 'em. Should they happen to climb over the sticks, I've got the prattiest bit of a shillelah ready that mortal eyes iver adorned! 'Twould break a head and niver a hat harmed — a thousand's the pities them chaps wears no hats. Howsever, we'll see."

"Thank you, Mike, for the courage you show, and the interest you take in all our welfares. Is it not too soon

to venture down upon the flats, Joel? I must trust to you as a guide."

"I think Miss Maud would do full as well if she did. Mike must be told, too, not to talk so much, and above all, not to speak so loud. He may be heard, sometimes, a dozen rods."

"Tould!" exclaimed the county Leitrim-man, in heat; "and isn't tould I've been twenty times already, by your own smooth conversation? Where's the occasion to tell a thing over and over ag'in, when a man is not wanting in ears? It's the likes of you that loves to convarse."

"Well, Mike, for my sake, you will be silent, I hope," said Maud. "Remember, I am not fitted for a battle, and the first thing is to get safely into the house. The sooner we are down the hill, perhaps, the better it may be. Lead the way, then, Joel, and I will follow. Michael will go next to you, in readiness for any enemy, and I will bring up the rear. It will be better for all to keep a dead silence, until it be necessary to speak."

This arrangement was made, and the party proceeded, Maud remaining a little behind, in order that the major might catch glimpses of her person, in the sombre light of the hour and the forest, and not miss the road. A few minutes brought them all upon the level land, where Joel, instead of entering the open fields, inclined more into the woods, always keeping one of the many paths. His object was to cross the rivulet under cover, a suitable place offering a short distance from the point where the stream glided out of the forest. Towards this spot Joel quietly held his way, occasionally stopping to listen if any movement of importance had occurred on the flats. As for Maud, her eyes were frequently cast behind her, for she was fearful Robert Willoughby might miss the path, having so little acquaintance with the thousand sinuosities he encountered. She caught glimpses of his person, however, in the distance, and saw that he was on the right track. Her chief concern, therefore, soon became an anxiety that he should not be seen by her companions. As they kept a little in advance, and the underbrush was somewhat thick, she had strong hopes that this evil would be avoided.

The path being very circuitous, it took some time to reach the spot Joel sought. Here he, Mike, and Maud crossed the rivulet on a tree that had been felled expressly to answer the purposes of a rustic foot-bridge; a common expedient of the American forest. As our heroine had often performed this exploit when alone, she required no assistance, and she felt as if half the danger of her critical situation had vanished, when she found herself on the same side of the stream as the hut. Joel, nothing suspecting, and keeping all his faculties on the sounds and sights that might occur in front, led the way diligently, and soon reached the verge of the woods. Here he paused for his companions to join him.

Twilight had, by this time, nearly disappeared. Still, enough remained to enable Maud to perceive that many were watching for her, either at the windows above the cliff, or through different parts of the stockades. The distance was so small, that it might have been possible, by raising the voice, even to converse; but this would be an experiment too hazardous, as some hostile scouts, at that hour, might very well be fearfully near.

"I see nothing, Miss Maud," observed Joel, after taking a good look around him. "By keeping the path that follows the edge of the brook, though it is so crooked, we shall be certain of good walking, and shall be half hid by the bushes. It's best to walk quick, and to be silent."

Maud bade him go on, waiting herself behind a tree, to let the two men precede her a short distance. This was done, and the major stole up to her side unseen. A few words of explanation passed, when the young lady ran after her guides, leaving Robert Willoughby seated on a log. It was a breathless moment to Maud, that in which she was passing this bit of open land. But the distance was so short, that it was soon got over; and the three found themselves beneath the cliff. Here they passed the spring, and following a path which led from it, turned the edge of the rocks, and ascended to the foot of the stockades. It remained to turn these also, in order to reach the so recently suspended gates. As Maud passed swiftly

along, almost brushing the timbers with her dress, she saw, in the dim light, fifty faces looking at her, and thrust between the timbers; but she paused not, spoke not — scarcely breathed. A profound stillness reigned on the Knoll; but when Joel arrived at the gate, it was instantly opened, and he glided in. Not so with Mike, who stopped and waited until she he had been in quest of entered before him, and was in safety.

Maud found herself in her mother's arms, the instant the gate was passed. Mrs. Willoughby had been at the angle of the cliff, had followed her child in her swift progress round the stockade, and was ready to receive her the moment she entered. Beulah came next, and then the captain embraced, kissed, wept over, and scolded his little favorite.

"No reproaches now, Hugh," said the more considerate wife and gentlewoman; "Maud has done no more than has long been her custom, and no one could have foreseen what has happened."

"Mother — father," said Maud, almost gasping for breath, "let us bless God for my safety, and for the safety of all that are dear to us — thank you, dear Mr. Woods — there is a kiss, to thank you — now let us go into the house; I have much to tell you — come, dear sir — come, dearest mother, do not lose a moment; let us all go to the library."

As this was the room in which the family devotions were usually held, the auditors fancied the excited girl wished to return her thanks in that mode, one not unfrequent in that regulated family, and all followed her, who dared, with tender sympathy in her feelings, and profoundly grateful for her safety. As soon as in the room, Maud carefully shut the door, and went from one to another, in order to ascertain who were present. Finding none but her father, mother, sister, and the chaplain, she instantly related all that had passed, and pointed out the spot where the major was, at that moment, waiting for the signal to approach. It is unnecessary to dwell on the astonishment and delight, mingled with concern, that this intelligence produced.

Maud then rapidly recounted her plan, and implored her father to see it executed. The captain had none of her apprehensions on the subject of his people's fidelity, but he yielded to the girl's earnest entreaties. Mrs. Willoughby was so agitated with all the unlooked-for events of the day, that she joined her daughter in the request, and Maud was told to proceed with the affair in her own way.

A lamp was brought, and placed by Maud in a pantry that was lighted by a single long, narrow, external window, at the angle of the building next the offices, and the door was closed on it. This lamp was the signal for the major to approach, and with beating hearts the females bent forward from the windows, secure of not being seen in the night, which had now fairly closed on the valley, to listen to his approaching footsteps beneath. They did not wait long ere he was not only heard, but dimly seen, though totally out of the line of sight from all in the Hut, with the exception of those above his head. Captain Willoughby had prepared a rope, one end of which was dropped, and fastened by the major himself around his body. A jerk let those above know when he was ready.

"What shall we do next?" asked the captain, in a sort of despair. "Woods and I can never drag that tall, heavy fellow up such a distance. He is six feet, and weighs a hundred and eighty, if he weighs a pound."

"Peace," half-whispered Maud from a window. "All will be right in a moment." Then drawing in her body, the pale but earnest girl begged her father to have patience. "I have thought of all. Mike and the blacks may be trusted with our lives — I will call them."

This was done, and the county Leitrim-man and the two Plinies were soon in the room.

"O'Hearn," said Maud, inquiringly, "I think you are my friend?"

"Am I my own? Is it yees, is the question? Well, jist wish for a tooth, and ye may take all in my head for the asking. Och, I'd be a baste, else! I'd ate the remainder of my days wid not'ing but a spoon to obleege ye."

"As for you, Pliny, and your son here, you have known us from children. Not a word must pass the lips of either, as to what you see — now pull, but with great care, lest the rope break."

The men did as ordered, raising their load from the ground a foot or two at a time. In this manner the burden approached, yard after yard, until it was evidently drawing near the window.

"It's the captain hoisting up the big baste of a hog, for provisioning the hoose agin a saige," whispered Mike to the negroes, who grinned as they tugged; "and when the cr'ature squails, see to it, that ye do not squail yerselves."

At that moment the head and shoulders of a man appeared at the window. Mike let go the rope, seized a chair, and was about to knock the intruder on the head; but the captain arrested the blow.

"It's one of the vagabond Injins that has undermined the hog, and coome up in its stead," roared Mike.

"It's my son," answered the captain, mildly; "see that you are silent, and secret."

CHAPTER XIII.

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion, wind —
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind.
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle.
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

BYRON.

MAJOR WILLOUGHBY'S feet were scarcely on the library floor when he was clasped in his mother's arms. From these he soon passed into Beulah's; nor did his father hesitate about giving him an embrace nearly as warm. As for Maud, she stood by, weeping in sympathy and in silence.

"And you too, old man," said Robert Willoughby, dashing the tears from his eyes, and turning to the elder black, holding out a hand, "this is not the first time, by many, old Pliny, that you have had me between heaven and earth. Your son was my old playfellow, and we must shake hands also. As for O'Hearn, steel is not truer, and we are friends for life."

The negroes were delighted to see their young master; for, in that day, the slaves exulted in the honor, appearance, importance, and dignity of their owners, far more than their liberated descendants do now in their own. The major had been their friend when a boy; and he was, at present, their pride and glory. In their view of the matter, the English army did not contain his equal in looks, courage, military skill, or experience; and it was treason *per se* to fight against a cause that he upheld. The captain had laughingly related to his wife a conversation to this effect he had not long before overheard between the two Plinies.

"Well, Miss Beuly do a pretty well," observed the elder,

"but, den he all 'e better, if he no get 'Merican 'mission. What you call raal colonel, eh? Have 'e paper from 'e king like Masser Bob, and wear a regimental like a head of a turkey-cock, so! Dat bein' an up and down officer."

"P'raps Miss Beuly bring a colonel round, and take off a blue coat, and put on a scarlet," answered the younger.

"Nebber! — nebber see dat, Plin, in a rebbleushun. Dis got to be a rebbleushun; and when *dat* begin in 'arnest, gib up all idee of 'mendment. Rebbleushuns look all one way — nebber see two side, any more than colored man see two side in a red-skin."

As we have not been able to trace the thought to antiquity, this expression may have been the original of the celebrated axiom of Napoleon, which tells us that "revolutions never go backwards." At all events, such was the notion of Pliny Willoughby, Sen., as the namesake of the great Roman styled himself; and it was greatly admired by Pliny Willoughby, Jun., to say nothing of the opinions of Big Smash and Little Smash, both of whom were listeners to the discourse.

"Well, I wish a Colonel Beekman" — to this name the fellow gave the true Doric sound of *Bake*man — "I wish a Colonel Beekman only corp'ral in king's troops, for Miss Beuly's sake. Better be sarjun dere, dan briggerdeer-ginral in 'Merican company; dat *I* know."

"What a briggerdeer mean, Plin?" inquired Little Smash, with interest. "Who he keep company wid, and what he do? Tell a body, do — so many officer in 'e army, one nebber know all he name."

"'Mericans can't hab 'em. Too poor for *dat*. Briggerdeer great gentleum, and wear a red coat. Old time, see 'em in hundreds, come to visit masser and missus, and play wid Masser Bob. Oh! no rebbleushun in dem days; but ebberybody know he own business, and do it too."

This will serve to show the political sentiments of the Plinies, and may also indicate the bias that the Smashes were likely to imbibe in such company. As a matter of course, the major was gladly welcomed by these devoted admirers; and when Maud again whispered to them the

necessity of secrecy, each shut his mouth, no trifling operation in itself, as if it were to be henceforth hermetically sealed.

The assistants were now dismissed, and the major was left alone with his family. Again and again Mrs. Willoughby embraced her son; nor had her new ties at all lessened Beulah's interest in her brother. Even the captain kissed his boy anew, while Mr. Woods shook hands once more with his old pupil, and blessed him. Maud alone was passive in this scene of feeling and joy.

"Now, Bob, let us to business," said the captain, as soon as tranquillity was a little restored. "You have not made this difficult and perilous journey without an object; and, as we are somewhat critically situated ourselves, the sooner we know what it is, the less will be the danger of its not producing its proper effect."

"Heaven send, dear sir, that it fail not in its effect, indeed," answered the son. "But is not this movement in the valley pressing, and have I not come opportunely to take a part in the defense of the house?"

"That will be seen a few hours later, perhaps. Everything is quiet now, and will probably so remain until near morning; or Indian tactics have undergone a change. The fellows have lighted camp-fires on their rocks, and seem disposed to rest for the present, at least. Nor do I know that they are bent on war at all. We have no Indians near us, who would be likely to dig up the hatchet; and these fellows profess peace, by a messenger they have sent me."

"Are they not in their war-paint, sir? I remember to have seen warriors, when a boy, and my glass has given these men the appearance of being on what they call a war-path.'"

"Some of them are certainly in that guise, though he who came to the Knoll was not. He pretended that they were a party travelling towards the Hudson in order to learn the true causes of the difficulties between their Great English and their Great American Fathers. He asked for meal and meat to feed his young men with. This was the whole purport of his errand."

"And your answer, sir; is it peace or war between you?"

"Peace in professions, but I much fear war in reality. Still one cannot know. An old frontier garrison-man, like myself, is not apt to put much reliance on Indian faith. We are now, God be praised! all within the stockade; and having plenty of arms and ammunition, are not likely to be easily stormed. A siege is out of the question; we are too well provisioned to dread that."

"But you leave the mills, the growing grain, the barns, even the cabins of your workmen, altogether at the mercy of these wretches."

"That cannot well be avoided, unless we go out and drive them off in open battle. For the last, they are too strong, to say nothing of the odds of risking fathers of families against mere vagabonds, as I suspect these savages to be. I have told them to help themselves to meal or grain, of which they will find plenty in the mill. Pork can be got in the houses, and they have made away with a deer already that I had expected the pleasure of dissecting myself. The cattle roam the woods at this season, and are tolerably safe; but they can burn the barns and other buildings, should they see fit. In this respect we are at their mercy. If they ask for rum or cider, that may bring matters to a head; for refusing may exasperate them, and granting either, in any quantity, will certainly cause them all to get intoxicated."

"Why would not that be good policy, Willoughby?" exclaimed the chaplain. "If fairly disguised once, our people might steal out upon them and take away all their arms. Drunken men sleep very profoundly."

"It would be a canonical mode of warfare, perhaps, Woods," returned the captain smiling, "but not exactly a military. I think it safer that they should continue sober; for, as yet, they manifest no great intentions of hostility. But of this we can speak hereafter. Why are you here, my son, and in this guise?"

"The motive may as well be told now, as at another time," answered the major, giving his mother and sisters

chairs, while the others imitated their example in being seated. "Sir William Howe has permitted me to come out to see you — I might almost say ordered me out; for matters have now reached a pass when we think every loyal gentleman in America must feel disposed to take sides with the crown."

A general movement among his auditors told the major the extent of the interest they felt in what was expected to follow. He paused an instant to survey the dark-looking group that was clustering around him; for no lights were in the room on account of the open windows, and he spoke in a low voice from motives of prudence; then he proceeded:

"I should infer from the little that passed between Maud and myself," he said, "that you are ignorant of the two most important events that have yet occurred in this unhappy conflict?"

"We learn little here," answered the father. "I have heard that my Lord Howe and his brother Sir William have been named commissioners by his Majesty to heal all the differences. I knew them both when young men, and their elder brother before them. Black Dick, as we used to call the admiral, is a discreet, well-meaning man; though I fear both of them owe their appointments more to their affinity to the sovereign than to the qualities that might best fit them to deal with the Americans."

"Little is known of the affinity of which you speak,[1] and less said in the army," returned the major, "but I fear there is no hope of the object of the commission's being effected. The American Congress has declared the colonies altogether independent of England; and so far

[1] The mother of the three Lords Howe, so well known in American history, namely: George, killed before Ticonderoga in the war of '56; Richard, the celebrated admiral, and the hero of the 1st June; and Sir William, for several years commander-in-chief in this country, and the fifth and last viscount; was a Mademoiselle Kilmansegge, who was supposed to be a natural daughter of George I. This would make these three officers and George II. first-cousins; and George III. their great-nephew *à la mode de Brétagne*. Walpole and various other English writers speak openly, not only of the connection, but of the family resemblance. Indeed, most of the gossiping writers of that age seem to allow that Lord Howe was a grandson of the first English sovereign of the House of Brunswick.

as this country is concerned, the war is carried on as between nation and nation. All allegiance, even in name, is openly cast aside."

"You astonish me, Bob! I did not think it could ever come to this!"

"I thought your native attachments would hardly endure as strong a measure as this has got to be," answered the major, not a little satisfied with the strength of feeling manifested by his father. "Yet has this been done, sir, and done in a way that it will not be easy to recall. Those who now resist us, resist for the sake of throwing off all connection with England."

"Has France any agency in this, Bob? I own it startles me, and has a French look."

"It has driven many of the most respectable of our enemies into our arms, sir. We have never considered you a direct enemy, though unhappily inclining too much against us; 'but this will determine Sir Hugh,' said the commander-in-chief in our closing interview — I suppose you know, my dear father, that all your old friends, knowing what has happened, insist on calling you Sir Hugh. I assure you, I never open my lips on the subject; and yet Lord Howe drank to the health of Sir Hugh Willoughby, openly at his own table, the last time I had the honor to dine with him."

"Then the next time he favors you with an invitation, Bob, be kind enough to thank him. I want no empty baronetcy, nor do I ever think of returning to England to live. Were all I had on earth drummed together it would barely make out a respectable competency for a private gentleman in that extravagant state of society; and what is a mere name to one in such circumstances? I wish it were transferable, my dear boy, in the old Scotch mode, and you should be Sir Bob before you slept."

"But, Willoughby, it may be useful to Robert, and why should he not have the title, since neither you nor I care for it?" asked the considerate mother.

"So he may, my dear; though he must wait for an event that I fancy you are not very impatient to witness

— my death. When I am gone, let him be Sir Robert in welcome. But, Bob — for plain, honest Bob must you remain till then, unless indeed you earn your spurs in this unhappy war — have you any military tidings for us? We have heard nothing since the arrival of the fleet on the coast."

"We are in New York, after routing Washington on Long Island. The rebels" — the major spoke a little more confidently than had been his wont — "the rebels have retreated into the high country, near the borders of Connecticut, where they have inveterate nests of the disaffected in their rear."

"And has all this been done without bloodshed? Washington had stuff in him in the old French business."

"His stuff is not doubted, sir; but his men make miserable work of it. Really I am sometimes ashamed of having been born in the country. These Yankees fight like wrangling women, rather than soldiers."

"How's this! You spoke honestly of the affair at Lexington, and wrote us a frank account of the murderous work at Bunker Hill. Have their natures changed with the change of season?"

"To own the truth, sir, they did wonders on the Hill, and not badly in the other affair; but all their spirit seems gone. I am quite ashamed of them. Perhaps this declaration of independence, as it is called, has damped their ardor."

"No, my son — the change, if change there is, depends on a general and natural law. Nothing but discipline and long training can carry men with credit through a campaign in the open field. Fathers, and husbands, and brothers, and lovers make formidable enemies in sight of their own chimney-tops; but the most flogging regiments, we used to say, were the best fighting regiments for a long pull. But have a care, Bob; you are now of a rank that may well get you a separate command, and do not despise your enemy. I know these Yankees well — you are one yourself, though only half-blooded; but I know them well, and have often seen them tried. They are very apt to be badly com-

manded, Heaven cursing them for their sins in this form more than any other — but get them fairly at work, and the guards will have as much as they can wish to get along with. Woods will swear to that."

"Objecting to the mode of corroboration, my dear sir, I can support its substance. Inclined as I am to uphold Cæsar, and to do honor to the Lord's anointed, I will not deny my countrymen's courage; though I think, Willoughby, now I recall old times, it was rather the fashion of our officers to treat it somewhat disrespectfully."

"It was, indeed," answered the captain thoughtfully; "and a silly thing it was. They mistook the nature of a mild and pacific people, totally without the glitter and habits of military life, for a timid people; and I have often heard the new hands in the colonies speak of their inhabitants with contempt on this very head. Braddock had that failing to a great degree; and yet this very Major Washington saved his army from annihilation when it came to truly desperate work. Mark the words of a much older soldier than yourself, Bob; you may have more of the bravery of apparel, and present a more military aspect; may even gain advantages over them by means of higher discipline, better arms, and more accurate combinations; but when you meet them fairly, depend on it you will meet dangerous foes, and men capable of being sooner drilled into good soldiers than any nation I have met with. Their great curse is, and probably will be, in selecting too many of their officers from classes not imbued with proper military pride, and altogether without the collaterals of a good military education."

To all this the major had nothing very material to object, and remembering that the silent but thoughtful Beulah had a husband in what he called the rebel ranks, he changed the subject. Arrangements were now made for the comfort and privacy of the unlooked-for guest. Adjoining the library, a room with no direct communication with the court by means of either door or window, was a small and retired apartment containing a cot-bed, to which the captain was accustomed to retire in the cases of indisposition, when Mrs.

Willoughby wished to have either of her daughters with herself, on their account, or on her own. This room was now given to the major, and in it he would be perfectly free from every sort of intrusion. He might eat in the library, if necessary; though all the windows of that wing of the house opening outward, there was little danger of being seen by any but the regular domestics of the family, all of whom were to be let into the secret of his presence, and all of whom were rightly judged to be perfectly trustworthy.

As the evening promised to be dark, it was determined among the gentlemen that the major should disguise himself still more than he was already, and venture outside of the building, in company with his father and the chaplain, as soon as the people, who were now crowded into the vacant rooms in the empty part of the house, had taken possession of their respective quarters for the night. In the mean time a hearty supper was provided for the traveller in the library, the bullet-proof window-shutters of that room, and indeed of all the others on that side of the building, having first been closed, in order that lights might be used without drawing a shot from the adjoining forest.

"We are very safe here," observed the captain, as his son appeased his hunger with the keen relish of a traveller. "Even Woods might stand a siege in a house built and stockaded like this. Every window has solid bullet-proof shutters, with fastenings not easily broken; and the logs of the buildings might almost defy round-shot. The gates are all up, one leaf excepted, and that leaf stands nearly in its place, well propped and supported. In the morning it shall be hung like the others. Then the stockade is complete, and has not a speck of decay about it yet. We shall keep a guard of twelve men up the whole night, with three sentinels outside of the buildings; and all of us will sleep in our clothes, and on our arms. My plan, should an assault be made, is to draw in the sentinels, as soon as they have discharged their pieces, to close the gate, and man the loops. The last are all open, and spare arms are distributed at them. I had a walk made within the ridge of the roofs this spring, by which men can run round the whole Hut in the

event of an attempt to set fire to the shingles, or fire over the ridge at an enemy at the stockades. It is a great improvement, Bob; and, as it is well railed, will make a capital station in a warm conflict before the enemy make their way within the stockade."

"We must endeavor not to let them get there, sir," answered the major; "but as soon as your people are housed I shall have an opportunity to reconnoitre. Open work is most to the taste of us regulars."

"Not against an Indian enemy. You will be glad of such a fortress as this, boy, before the question of independence or no independence shall be finally settled. Did not Washington entrench in the town?"

"Not much on that side of the water, sir; though he was reasonably well in the ground on Long Island. There he had many thousands of men, and works of some extent."

"And how did he get off the island?" demanded the captain, turning round to look his son in the face. "The arm of the sea is quite half a mile in width at that point — how did he cross it in the face of a victorious army? or did he only save himself while you captured his troops?"

The major colored a little, and then he looked at Beulah and smiled good-naturedly.

"I am so surrounded by rebels here," he said, "that it is not easy to answer all your questions, sir. Beat him we did, beyond a question, and that with a heavy loss to his army — and out of New York we have driven him, beyond a question — but — I will not increase Beulah's conceit by stating any more!"

"If you can tell me anything kind of Evert, Bob, you will act like a brother in so doing," said the gentle wife.

"Aye, Beekman did well too, they said. I heard some of our officers extolling a charge he made; and to own the truth, I was not sorry to be able to say he was my sister's husband, since a fierce rebel she would marry. All our news of him is to his credit; and now I shall get a kiss for my pains."

The major was not mistaken. With a swelling heart, but smiling countenance, his sister threw herself into his

arms, when she kissed and was kissed until the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"It was of Washington I intended to speak, sir," resumed the major, dashing a tear or two from his own eyes, as Beulah resumed her chair. "His retreat from the island is spoken of as masterly, and has gained him great credit. He conducted it in person, and did not lose a man. I heard Sir William mention it as masterly."

"Then, by Heaven, America will prevail in this contest!" exclaimed the captain, striking his fist upon the table with a suddenness and force that caused all in the room to start. "If she has a general who can effect such a movement skillfully, the reign of England is over, here. Why, Woods, Xenophon never did a better thing! The retreat of the ten thousand was boys' play to getting across that water. Besides, your victory could have been no great matter, Bob, or it would never have been done."

"Our victory was respectable, sir, while I acknowledge that the retreat was great. No one among us denies it, and Washington is always named with respect in the army."

In a minute more, Big Smash came in under the pretense of removing the dishes, but in reality to see Master Bob, and to be noticed by him. She was a woman of sixty, the mother of Little Smash, herself a respectable matron of forty; and both had been born in the household of Mrs. Willoughby's father, and had rather more attachment for any one of her children than for all of their own, though each had been reasonably prolific. The sobriquets had passed into general use, and the real names of Bess and Mari' were nearly obsolete. Still, the major thought it polite to use the latter on the present occasion.

"Upon my word, Mrs. Bess," he said, shaking the old woman cordially by the hand, though he instinctively shrank back from the sight of a pair of lips that were quite ultra, in the way of pouting, which used often to salute him twenty years before, "upon my word, Mrs. Bess, you improve in beauty every time I see you. Old age and you seem to be total strangers to each other. How do you manage to remain so comely and so young?"

"God send 'e fus', Masser Bob, Heabben be praise, and a good conscience do 'e las'. I do wish you could make ole Plin hear dat! He nebber t'ink any good look, nowaday, in a ole wench."

"Pliny is half blind. But that is the way with most husbands, Smash; they become blind to the charms of their spouses, after a few years of matrimony."

"Nebber get marry, Masser Bob, if dat be 'e way."

Then Great Smash gave such a laugh, and such a swing of her unwieldy body, that one might well have apprehended her downfall. But, no such thing. She maintained the equilibrium; for, renowned as she had been all her life at producing havoc among plates, and cups, and bowls, she was never known to be thrown off her own centre of gravity. Another hearty shake of the hand followed, and the major quitted the table. As was usual on all great and joyous occasions in the family, when the emotions reached the kitchen, that evening was remarkable for a "smash," in which half the crockery that had just been brought from the table, fell an unresisting sacrifice. This produced a hot discussion between "The Big" and "The Little," as to the offender, which resulted, as so often happens in these inquiries into the accidents of domestic life, in the conclusion that "nobody" was alone to blame.

"How 'e t'ink he can come back, and not a plate crack!" exclaimed Little Smash, in a vindicatory tone, she being the real delinquent. "Get in 'e winder, too! Lor! dat enough to break all 'e dish in 'e house, and in 'e mill too! I do wish ebbery plate we got was an Injin — den you see fun! Can nebber like Injin; 'em so red and so sabbage!"

"Nebber talk of Injin, now," answering the indignant mother, "better talk of plate. Dis make forty t'ousand dish you break, Mari', sin' you war' a young woman. S'pose you t'ink masser made of plate, dat you break 'em up so! Dat what ole Plin say — de nigger! He say all men made of clay, and plate made of clay, too — well, bot' clay and bot' break. All on us wessels, and all on us break to pieces some day, and den dey'll t'row us away too."

A general laugh succeeded this touch of morality, Great Smash being a little addicted to ethical remarks of this nature; after which the war was renewed on the subject of the broken crockery. Nor did it soon cease; wrangling, laughing, singing, toiling, a light-heartedness that knew no serious cares, and affection, making up the sum of the every-day existence of these semi-civilized beings. The presence of the party in the valley, however, afforded the subject of an episode; for a negro has quite as much of the *de haut en bas* in his manner of viewing the aborigines, as the whites have in their speculations on his own race. Mingled with this contempt, notwithstanding, was a very active dread, neither of the Plinies, nor of their amiable consorts, in the least relishing the idea of being shorn of the wool with shears as penetrating as the scalping-knife. After a good deal of discussion on this subject, the kitchen arrived at the conclusion that the visit of the major was ordered by Providence, since it was out of all the rules of probability and practice to have a few half-clad savages get the better of "Masser Bob," who was born a soldier, and had so recently been fighting for the king.

On the latter subject, we ought to have stated that the captain's kitchen was ultra-royal. The rude but simple beings it contained, had a reverence for rank and power that even a "rebbleushun" could not disturb, and which closely associated in their minds royal authority with divine power. Next to their own master, they considered George III. as the greatest man of the age; and there was no disposition in them to rob him of his rights or his honors.

"You seem thoughtful, Woods," said the captain, while his son had retired to his own room, in order to assume a disguise less likely to attract attention in the garrison than a hunting suit. "Is it this unexpected visit of Bob's that furnishes food for reflection?"

"Not so much his visit, my dear Willoughby, as the news he brings us. God knows what will befall the Church should this rebellion make a serious head. The country is in a dreadful way already on the subject of religion; but it will be far worse if these 'canters' get the upper hand of the government."

The captain was silent and thoughtful for a moment; then laughingly replied, —

"Fear nothing for the Church, chaplain. It is of God, and will outlast a hundred political revolutions."

"I don't know that, Willoughby — I don't know that" — the chaplain did not exactly mean what he said — "'twouldn't surprise me if we had 'taking up collections,' 'sitting under preaching,' 'providentially happening,' 'exercised in mind,' and 'our Zion,' finding their way into dictionaries."

"Quite likely, Woods," returned the captain, smiling; "liberty is known to produce great changes in things; why not in language?"

"Liberty, indeed! Yes; 'liberty in prayer' is another of their phrases. Well, Captain Willoughby, if this rebellion should succeed, we may give up all hopes for the Church. What sort of government shall we have, do you imagine, sir?"

"Republican, of course," answered the captain, again becoming thoughtful, as his mind reverted to the important results that were really dependent on the present state of things. "Republican; it can be no other. These colonies have always had a strong bias in that direction, and they want the elements necessary to a monarchy. New York has a landed gentry, it is true; and so have Maryland, and Virginia, and the Carolinas; but they are not strong enough to set up a political aristocracy, or to prop a throne; and then this gentry will probably be much weakened by the struggle. Half the principal families are known to be with the crown as it is; and new men will force them out of place in a revolution. No, Woods, if this revolution prosper, the monarchy is done in America for at least a century."

"And the prayers for the king and royal family — what will become of them?"

"I should think they must cease, also. I question if a people will continue long to pray for authorities that they refuse to obey."

"I shall stick to the rubrics as long as I have a tongue

in my head. I trust, Willoughby, you will not stop these prayers in your settlement?"

"It is the last mode in which I should choose to show hostility. Still you must allow it is a little too much to ask a congregation to pray that the king shall overcome his enemies, when they are among those very enemies? The question presents a dilemma."

"And yet I have never failed to read that prayer, as well as all the rest. You have not objected, hitherto."

"I have not, for I have considered the war as being waged with parliament and the ministers, whereas it is now clearly with the king. This paper is certainly a plain and forcible document."

"And what is that paper? Not the Westminster Confession of Faith, or the Saybrook Platform, I hope; one of which will certainly supersede the Thirty-nine Articles in all our churches, if this rebellion prosper."

"It is the manifesto issued by Congress to justify their declaration of independence. Bob has brought it with him as a proof how far matters have been carried; but really it seems to be a creditable document, and is eloquently reasoned."

"I see how it is, Willoughby — I see how it is. We shall find you a rebel general yet; and I expect to live to hear you talk about 'our Zion' and 'providential accidents.'"

"Neither, Woods. For the first, I am too old; and for the last I have too much taste, I trust. Whether I shall always pray for the king is another matter. But here is the major ready for his sortie. Upon my word his masquerade is so complete, I hardly know him myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day;
But walked him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.
SIEGE OF CORINTH.

It was now so late that most of the men of the Hut, and all the women and children, were housed for the night, provided no alarm occurred. There was consequently little risk in the major's venturing forth disguised as he was, should care be taken not to approach a light. The great number of the latter, streaming through the windows of the western wing of the building, showed how many were now collected within the walls, and gave an unusual appearance of life and animation to the place. Still the court was clear, the men seeking their pallets in readiness for their coming watches, while the women were occupied with the great concern of female life, the care of children.

The captain, major, and chaplain, each carrying a rifle, and the two former pistols, moved rapidly across the court, and passed the gate. The movable leaf of the latter was left unbarred, it being the orders of the captain to the sentinels without, on the approach of an enemy, to retire within the court, and then to secure the fastenings.

The night was starlight, and it was cool, as is common to this region of country. There being neither lamp nor candle on the exterior of the house, even the loops being darkened, there was little danger of moving about within the stockades. The sentinels were directed to take their posts so near the palisades as to command views of the open lawn without, a precaution that would effectually prevent the usual stealthy approach of an enemy without discovery. As the alarm had been very decided, these irregular guard

ians of the house were all at their posts, and exceedingly watchful, a circumstance that enabled the captain to avoid them, and thus further remove the danger of his son's being recognized. He accordingly held himself aloof from the men, keeping within the shadows of the sides of the Hut.

As a matter of course, the first object to which our two soldiers directed their eyes, was the rock above the mill. The Indians had lighted fires, and were now apparently bivouacked at no great distance from them, having brought boards from below with that especial object. Why they chose to remain in this precise position, and why they neglected the better accommodations afforded by some fifteen or twenty log-cabins that skirted the western side of the valley in particular, were subjects of conjecture. That they were near the fires the board shanties proved, and that they were to the last degree careless of the proximity of the people of the place, would seem also to be apparent in the fact that they had not posted, so far as could be ascertained, even a solitary sentinel.

"This is altogether surprising for Indian tactics," observed the captain, in a low voice; for everything that was uttered that night without the building was said in very guarded tones. "I have never before known the savages to cover themselves in that manner; nor is it usual with them to light fires to point out the positions they occupy, as these fellows seem to have done."

"Is it not all seeming, sir?" returned the major. "To me that camp, if camp it can be called, has an air of being deserted."

"There is a look about it of premeditated preparation, that one ought always to distrust in war."

"Is it not unmilitary, sir, for two soldiers like ourselves to remain in doubt on such a point? My professional pride revolts at such a state of things; and, with your leave, I will go outside, and set the matter at rest by reconnoitering."

"Professional pride is a good thing, Bob, rightly understood and rightly practiced. But the highest point of honor with the really good soldier is to do that for which he was

precisely intended. Some men fancy armies were got together just to maintain certain exaggerated notions of military honor; whereas, military honor is nothing but a moral expedient to aid in effecting the objects for which they are really raised. I have known men so blinded as to assert that a soldier is bound to maintain his honor at the expense of the law; and this in the face of the fact that, in a free country, a soldier is in truth nothing but one of the props of the law, in the last resort. So with us; we are here to defend this house and those it contains; and our military honor is far more concerned in doing that effectually, and by right means, than in running the risk of not doing it at all, in order to satisfy an abstract and untenable notion of a false code. Let us do what is right, my son, and feel no concern that our honor suffer."

Captain Willoughby said this, because he fancied it a fault in his son's character, sometimes to confound the end with the means, in appreciating the ethics of his profession.

This is not an uncommon error among those who bear arms, instances not being wanting in which bodies of men that are the mere creatures of authority, have not hesitated to trample the power that brought them into existence under foot, rather than submit to mortify the feelings of a purely conventional and exaggerated pride. The major was rebuked rather than convinced, it not being the natural vocation of youth to perceive the justice of all the admonitions of age.

"But, if one can be made auxiliary to the other, sir," the son remarked, "then you will allow that professional *esprit*, and professional prudence, may very well march hand in hand."

"Of that there can be no doubt, though I think it far wiser and more soldier-like, even, to use all proper precautions to guard this house, under our actual circumstances, than to risk anything material in order to satisfy our doubts concerning the state of that camp."

"But the cabins, and all the property that lies exposed to fire and other accidents, including the mills — is it not

worth your while to let me make a little excursion in order to ascertain the state of things as connected with them?"

"Perhaps it would, Bob," returned the father, after a little reflection. "It would be a great point gained to send a man to look after the buildings and horses. The poor beasts may be suffering for water; and, as you say, the first thing will be to ascertain where our wild visitors really are, and what they are actually bent on. Woods, go with us to the gate and let us out. I rely on your saying nothing of our absence, except to explain to the two nearests entinels who we are, and to be on the lookout for us against the moment we may return."

"Will it not be very hazardous to be moving in front of the stockade in the dark? Some of our own people may fire upon you."

"You will tell them to be cautious, and we shall use great circumspection in our turn. I had better give you a signal by which we shall be known."

This was done, and the party moved from under the shadows of the Hut down to the gate. Here the two soldiers halted for several minutes, taking a deliberate and as thorough a survey of the scene without as the darkness permitted. Then the chaplain opened the gate, and they issued forth, moving with great caution down the lawn towards the flats. As a matter of course, Captain Willoughby was perfectly familiar with all the lanes, ditches, bridges, and fields of his beautiful possessions. The alluvial soil that lay spread around him was principally the result of ages of deposit while the place was covered with water; but as the overflowing of the water had been produced by a regular dam, the latter once removed, the meadows were free from the excessive moisture which generally saturates drained lands. Still, there were two or three large open ditches to collect the water that came down the adjacent mountains, or bubbled up from springs near the margin of the woods. Across these ditches the roads led, by bridges, and the whole valley was laid out in this manner, equally with a view to convenience and rural beauty. A knowledge of all the windings was of great use on the present occasion, even

on the advance; while on the retreat it might clearly be the means of preserving the lives or liberties of the two adventurers.

The captain did not proceed by the principal road which led from the Hut to the mills, the great thoroughfare of the valley, since it might be watched, in order to prevent a hostile sortie against the camp; but he inclined to the right, or to the westward, in order to visit the cabins and barns in that quarter. It struck him his invaders might have quietly taken possession of the houses, or even have stolen his horses and decamped. In this direction, then, he and his son proceeded, using the greatest caution in their movements, and occasionally stopping to examine the waning fires at the rock, or to throw a glance behind them at the stockade. Everything remained in the quiet which renders a forest settlement so solemn and imposing after the daily movements of man have ceased. The deepest and most breathless attention could not catch an unaccustomed sound. Even the bark of a dog was not heard, all those useful animals having followed their masters into the Hut, as if conscious that their principal care now lay in that direction. Each of the sentinels had one of these animals near him, crouched under the stockade, in the expectation of their giving the alarm should any strange footstep approach. In this manner most of the distance between the Knoll and the forest was crossed, when the major suddenly laid a hand on his father's arm.

"Here is something stirring on our left," whispered the former; "it seems, too, to be crouching under the fence."

"You have lost your familiarity with our rural life, Bob," answered the father, with a little more confidence of tone, but still guardedly, "or this fragrant breath would tell you we are almost on a cow. It is old Whiteback; I know her by her horns. Feel; she is here in the lane with us, and within reach of your hand. A gentler animal is not in the settlement. But, stop, pass your hand on her udder, she will not stir; how is it, full or not?"

"If I can judge, sir, it is nothing remarkable in the way of size."

"I understand this better. By Jupiter, boy, that cow has been milked! It is certain that none of our people have left the house to do it since the alarm was first given. This is ominous of neighbors."

The major made no reply, but he felt to ascertain if his arms were in a state for immediate service. After a moment's further pause the captain proceeded, moving with increased caution. Not a word was now uttered, for they were getting within the shadows of the orchard, and indeed of the forest, where objects could not well be distinguished at the distance of a very few yards. A cabin was soon reached, and it was found empty; the fire reduced to a few embers, and quite safe. This was the residence of the man who had the care of the horses, the stables standing directly behind it. Captain Willoughby was a thoughtful and humane man, and it struck him the animals might now be turned into a field that joined the barn-yard, where there was not only rich pasture, but plenty of sweet running water. This he determined to do at once, the only danger being from the unbridled movements of cattle that must be impatient from unusual privation and a prolonged restraint.

The major opened the gate of the field, and stationed himself in a way to turn the animals in the desired direction, while his father went into the stable to set them free. The first horse came out with great deliberation, being an old animal well cooled with toil at the plough, and the major had merely to swing his arm, to turn him into the field. Not so with the next, however. This was little better than a colt, a creature in training for his master's saddle; and no sooner was it released than it plunged into the yard, then bounded into the field, around which it galloped, until it found the water. The others imitated this bad example; the clatter of hoofs, though beaten on a rich turf, soon resounding in the stillness of the night, until it might be heard across the valley. The captain then rejoined his son.

"This is a good deed somewhat clumsily done, Bob," observed the father, as he picked up his rifle and prepared to proceed. "An Indian ear, however, will not fail to distinguish between the trampling of horses and a charge of foot."

"Faith, sir, the noise may serve us a good turn yet. Let us take another look at the fires, and see if this trampling has set any one in motion near them. We can get a glimpse a little farther ahead."

The look was taken, but nothing was seen. While standing perfectly motionless beneath the shadows of an apple-tree, however, a sound was heard quite near them, which resembled that of a guarded footstep. Both gentlemen drew up, like sportsmen expecting the birds to rise, in waiting for the sound to approach. It did draw nearer, and presently a human form was seen moving slowly forward in the path, approaching the tree, as if to get within its cover. It was allowed to draw nearer and nearer, until Captain Willoughby laid his hand, from behind the trunk, on the stranger's shoulder, demanding sternly, but in a low voice, "Who are you?"

The start, the exclamation, and the tremor that succeeded, all denoted the extent of this man's surprise. It was some little time, even, before he could recover from his alarm, and then he let himself be known by his answer.

"Massy!" exclaimed Joel Strides, who ordinarily gave this Doric sound to the word "mercy" — "massy, captain, is it you! I should as soon thought of seeing a ghost! What in natur' has brought you out of the stockade, sir?"

"I think that is a question I might better ask you, Mr. Strides. My orders were to keep the gate close, and for no one to quite the court-yard even, until sent on post, or called by an alarm."

"True, sir — quite true — true as gospel. But let us moderate a little, captain, and speak lower; for the Lord only knows who's in our neighborhood. Who's that with you, sir? — not the Rev. Mr. Woods is it?"

"No matter who is with me. He has the authority of my commands for being here, whoever he may be, while you are here in opposition to them. You know me well enough, Joel, to understand nothing but the simple truth will satisfy me."

"Lord, sir, I am one of them that never wish to tell you anything but truth. The captain has known me now long

enough to understand my natur', I should think; so no more need be said about that."

"Well, sir — give me the reason — and see that it is given to me without reserve."

"Yes, sir; the captain shall have it. He knows we scrambled out of our houses this afternoon a little onthinkingly, Injin alarms being skeary matters. It was an awful hurrying time! Well, the captain understands, too, we don't work for him without receiving our wages; and I have been laying up a little every year, until I've scraped together a few hundred dollars, in good half-joes; and I bethought me the money might be in danger, should the savages begin to plunder; and I've just came out to look a'ter the money."

"If this be true, as I hope and can easily believe to be the case, you must have the money about you, Joel, to prove it."

The man stretched forth his arm, and let the captain feel a handkerchief, in which, sure enough, there was a goodly quantity of coin. This gave him credit for truth, and removed all suspicion of his present excursion being made with any sinister intention. The man was questioned as to his mode of passing the stockade, when he confessed he had fairly clambered over it, an exploit of no great difficulty from the inside. As the captain had known Joel too long to be ignorant of his love of money, and the offense was very pardonable in itself, he readily forgave the breach of orders. This was the only man in the valley who did not trust his little hoard in the iron chest at the Hut, even the miller reposing that much confidence in the proprietor of the estate; but Joel was too conscious of dishonest intentions himself to put any unnecessary faith in others.

All this time, the major kept so far aloof as not to be recognized, though Joel once or twice betrayed symptoms of a desire to ascertain who he was. Maud had awakened suspicions that now became active, in both father and son, when circumstances so unexpectedly and inconveniently threw the man in their way. It was consequently the wish

of the former to get rid of his overseer as soon as possible. Previously to doing this, however, he saw fit to interrogate him a little further.

"Have you seen anything of the Indians since you left the stockade, Strides?" demanded the captain. "We can perceive no other traces of their presence than yonder fires, though we think that some of them must have passed this way, for Whiteback's udder is empty."

"To own the truth, captain, I haven't. I some think that they've left the valley; though the Lord only can tell when they'll be back ag'in. Such critturs be beyond calcilation! They outdo arithmetic, nohow. As for the cow, I milked her myself; for being the crittur the captain has given to Phœbe for her little dairy, I thought it might hurt her not to be attended to. The pail stands yonder, under the fence, and the women and children in the Hut may be glad enough to see it in the morning."

This was very characteristic of Joel Strides. He did not hesitate about disobeying orders, or even to risk his life, in order to secure his money; but, determined to come out, he had the forethought and care to bring a pail, in order to supply the wants of those who were now crowded within the stockade, and who were too much accustomed to this particular sort of food, not to suffer from its absence. If we add, that in the midst of all this prudent attention to the wants of his companions, Joel had an eye to his personal popularity and what are called "ulterior events," and that he selected his own cow for the precise reason given, the reader has certain distinctive traits of the man before him.

"This being the case," returned the captain, a good deal relieved at finding that the savages had not been the agents in this milking affair, since it left the probability of their remaining stationary; "this being the case, Joel, you had be.ter find the pail, and go in. As soon as day dawns, however, I recommend that all the cows be called up to the stockade and milked generally. They are feeding in the lanes just now, and will come readily, if properly invited. Go then, but say nothing of having met me, and" —

"Who else did the captain say?" inquired Joel, curiously, observing that the other paused.

"Say nothing of having met us at all, I tell you. It is very important that my movements should be secret."

The two gentlemen now moved on, intending to pass in front of the cabins which lined this part of the valley, by a lane which would bring them out at the general highway which led from the Knoll to the mill. The captain marched in front, while his son brought up the rear, at a distance of two or three paces. Each walked slowly and with caution, carrying his rifle in the hollow of his arm, in perfect readiness for service. In this manner both had proceeded a few yards when Robert Willoughby felt his elbow touched, and saw Joel's face within eighteen inches of his own, as the fellow peered under his hat. It was an action so sudden and unexpected, that the major saw, at once, nothing but perfect coolness could avert his discovery.

"Is't you, Dan'el" — so was the miller named. "What in natur' has brought the old man on this tramp, with the valley filled with Injins?" whispered Joel, prolonging the speech in order to get a better view of a face and form that still baffled his conjectures. "Let's know all about it."

"You'll get me into trouble," answered the major, shaking off his unwelcome neighbor, moving a step farther from him, and speaking also in a whisper. "The captain's bent on a scout, and you know he'll not bear contradiction. Off with you then, and don't forget the milk."

As the major moved away and seemed determined to baffle him, Joel had no choice between complying and exposing his disobedience of orders to the captain. He disliked doing the last, for his cue was to seem respectful and attached, and he was fain to submit. Never before, however, did Joel Strides suffer a man to slip through his fingers with so much reluctance. He saw that the captain's companion was not the miller, while the disguise was too complete to enable him to distinguish the person or face. In that day the different classes of society were strongly distinguished from each other by their ordinary

attire; and accustomed to see Major Willoughby only in the dress that belonged to his station, he would not be likely to recognize him in his present guise; had he even known of or suspected his visit. As it was, he was completely at fault; satisfied it was not his friend Daniel, while unable to say who it was.

In this doubting state of mind Joel actually forgot the savages, and the risks he might run from their proximity. He walked, as it might be, mechanically, to the place where he had left the pail, and then proceeded slowly towards the Knoll, pondering at every step on what he had just seen. He and the miller had secret communications with certain active agents of the revolutionists, that put them in possession of facts, notwithstanding their isolated position, with which even their employer was totally unacquainted. It is true, these agents were of that low caste that never fail to attach themselves to all great political enterprises, with a sole view to their own benefit; still, as they were active, cunning, and bold, and had the sagacity to make themselves useful, they passed in the throng of patriots created by the times, and were enabled to impart to men of similar spirits much available information.

It was through means like these that Joel knew of the all-important measure of the declaration of independence, while it still remained a secret to Captain Willoughby. The hope of confiscations was now active in the bosoms of all this set, and many of them had even selected the portions of property that they intended should be the reward of their own love of freedom and patriotism. It has been said that the English ministry precipitated the American Revolution, with a view to share among their favorites the estates that it was thought it would bring within the gift of the crown — a motive so heinous as almost to defy belief, and which may certainly admit of rational doubts. On the other hand, however, it is certain that individuals who will go down to posterity in company with the many justly illustrious names that the events of 1776 have committed to history, were actuated by the most selfish inducements, and in divers instances enriched themselves with the wrecks

of estates that formerly belonged to their kinsmen or friends. Joel Strides was of too low a class to get his name enrolled very high on the list of heroes, nor was he at all ambitious of any such distinction; but he was not so low that he could not and did not aspire to become the owner of the property of the Hutted Knoll. In an ordinary state of society so high a flight would seem irrational in so low an aspirant; but Joel came of a people who seldom measure their pretensions by their merits, and who imagine that to boldly aspire, more especially in the way of money, is the first great step to success. The much talked of and little understood doctrine of political equality has this error to answer for, in thousands of cases; for nothing can be more hopeless in the nature of things than to convince a man of the necessity of possessing qualities of whose existence he has not even a faint perception, ere he may justly pretend to be put on a level with the high-minded, the just, the educated, and the good. Joel, therefore, saw no other reason than the law against his becoming the great landlord as well as Captain Willoughby; and could the law be so moulded as to answer his purposes, he had discreetly resolved to care for no other considerations. The thought of the consequences to Mrs. Willoughby and her daughters gave him no concern whatever; they had already possessed the advantages of their situation so long as to give Phœbe and the miller's wife a sort of moral claim to succeed them. In a word, Joel, in his yearnings after wealth, had only faintly shadowed forth the modern favorite doctrine of "rotation in office."

The appearance of a stranger in company with Captain Willoughby could not fail, therefore, to give rise to many conjectures in the mind of a man whose daily and hourly thoughts were running on these important changes. "Who can it be?" thought Joel, as he crawled along the lane, bearing the milk, and lifting one leg after the other, as if lead were fastened to his feet. "Dan'el it is not — nor is it any one that I can consait on, about the Hut. The captain is mightily strengthened by this marriage of his da'ter with Colonel Beekman, that's sartain. The colonel

stands wonderful well with our folks, and he'll not let all this first-rate land with such capital betterments go out of the family without an iffort, I conclude — but then I calcilate on his being killed — there must be a disperate lot on 'em shot, afore the war's over, and he is as likely to be among 'em as another. Dan'el thinks the colonel has the look of a shortlived man. Waal; to-morrow will bring about a knowledge of the name of the captain's companion, and then a body may calcilate with greater sartainty!"

This is but an outline of what passed through Joel's mind as he moved onward. It will serve, however, to let the reader into the secret of his thoughts, as well as into their ordinary train, and is essentially connected with some of the succeeding events of our legend. As the overseer approached the stockade, his ideas were so abstracted that he forgot the risk he ran; but walking carelessly towards the palisades, the dogs barked, and then he was saluted by a shot. This effectually aroused Joel, who called out in his natural voice, and probably saved his life by so doing. The report of the rifle, however, produced an alarm, and by the time the astounded overseer had staggered up to the gate, the men were pouring out from the court, armed, and expecting an assault. In the midst of this scene of confusion the chaplain admitted Joel, as much astonished as the man himself, at the whole of the unexpected occurrence.

It is unnecessary to say that many questions were asked. Joel got rid of them by simply stating that he had gone out to milk a cow, by the captain's private orders, and that he had forgotten to arrange any signal, by which his return might be known. He ventured to name his employer, because he knew he was not there to contradict him; and Mr. Woods being anxious to ascertain if his two friends had been seen, sent the men back to their lairs without delay, detaining the overseer at the gate for a minute's private discourse. As the miller obeyed with the rest, he asked for the pail with an eye to his own children's comfort; but on receiving it he found it empty! The bullet had passed through it, and the contents had escaped.

"Did you see any thing or person, Strides?" demanded the chaplain, as soon as the two were alone.

"Lord, Mr. Woods, I met the captain! The sight on him came over me a'most as cruelly as the shot from the rifle; for I no more expected it than I do to see you rise up to heaven, in your clothes, like Elijah of old. Sure enough, there was the captain himself, and — and" —

Here Joel sneezed, repeating the word "and" several times, in hopes the chaplain would supply the name he so much wished to hear.

"But you saw no savages? I know the captain is out and you will be careful not to mention it, lest it get to Mrs Willoughby's ears, and make her uneasy. You saw nothing of the savages?"

"Not a bit; the critturs lie cluss enough, if they haven't actually tramped. Who did you say was with the captain, Mr. Woods?"

"I said nothing about it — I merely asked after the Indians, who, as you say, do keep themselves very close. Well, Joel, go to your wife, who must be getting anxious about you, and be prudent."

Thus dismissed, the overseer did not dare to hesitate; but he entered the court, still pondering on the late meeting.

As for the two adventurers, they pursued their march in silence. As a matter of course they heard the report of the rifle, and caught some faint sounds from the alarm that succeeded; but readily comprehending the cause, they produced no uneasiness; the stillness which succeeded soon satisfying them that all was right. By this time they were within a hundred yards of the flickering fires. The major had kept a strict watch on the shanties at the report of the rifle, but not a living thing was seen moving in their vicinity. This induced him to think the place deserted, and he whispered as much to his father.

"With any other enemy than an Indian," answered the latter, "you might be right enough, Bob, but with these rascals one is never certain. We must advance with a good deal of their own caution."

This was done, and the gentlemen approached the fires in the most guarded manner, keeping the shanties between them and the light. By this time, however, the flames

were nearly out, and there was no great difficulty in looking into the nearest shanty without much exposure. It was deserted, as proved to be the case with all the others, on further examination. Major Willoughby now moved about on the rock with greater confidence; for, naturally brave, and accustomed to use his faculties with self-command in moments of trial, he drew the just distinctions between real danger and unnecessary alarm, the truest of all tests of courage.

The captain, feeling a husband's and a father's responsibility, was a little more guarded; but success soon gave him more confidence, and the spot was thoroughly explored. The two then descended to the mills, which, together with the adjacent cabins, they entered also, and found uninjured and empty. After this, several other suspected points were looked at, until the captain came to the conclusion that the party had retired for the night at least, if not entirely. Making a circuit, however, he and his son visited the chapel, and one or two dwellings on that side of the valley, when they bent their steps towards the Knoll.

As the gentlemen approached the stockade, the captain gave a loud hem, and clapped his hands. At the signal the gate flew open, and they found themselves in company with their friend the chaplain once more. A few words of explanation told all they had to say, and then the three passed into the court, and separated, each taking the direction towards his own room. The major, fatigued with the toils of a long march, was soon in a soldier's sleep; but it was hours before his more thoughtful and still uneasy father could obtain the rest which nature so much requires.

CHAPTER XV.

I could teach you,
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;
So will I never be; so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin
That I had been forsworn.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

CAPTAIN WILLOUGHBY knew that the hour which preceded the return of light was that in which the soldier had the most to apprehend when in the field. This is the moment when it is usual to attempt surprises, and it was, in particular, the Indian's hour of blood. Orders had been left, accordingly, to call him at four o'clock, and to see that all the men of the Hut were afoot, and armed also. Notwithstanding the deserted appearance of the valley, this experienced frontier warrior distrusted the signs of the times; and he looked forward to the probability of an assault, a little before the return of day, with a degree of concern he would have been sorry to communicate to his wife and daughters.

Every emergency had been foreseen, and such a disposition made of the forces, as enabled the major to be useful, in the event of an attack, without exposing himself unnecessarily to the danger of being discovered. He was to have charge of the defense of the rear of the Hut, or that part of the buildings where the windows opened outwards; and Michael and the two Plinies were assigned him as assistants. Nor was the ward altogether a useless one. Though the cliff afforded a material safeguard to this portion of the defenses, it might be scaled; and it will be remembered there was no stockade at all on this, the northern end of the house.

When the men assembled in the court, therefore, about

an hour before the dawn, Robert Willoughby collected his small force in the dining-room, the outer apartment of the suite, where he examined their arms by lamp-light, inspected their accoutrements, and directed them to remain until he issued fresh orders. His father, aided by Sergeant Joyce, did the same in the court, issuing out through the gate of the buildings with his whole force, as soon as this duty was performed. The call being general, the women and children were all up also; many of the former repairing to the loops, while the least resolute, or the less experienced of their number, administered to the wants of the young, or busied themselves with the concerns of the household. In a word, the Hut, at that early hour, resembled a hive in activity, though the different pursuits had not much affinity to the collection of honey.

It is not to be supposed that Mrs. Willoughby and her daughters still courted their pillows on an occasion like this. They rose with the others, the grandmother and Beulah bestowing their first care on the little Evert, as if his life and safety were the considerations uppermost in their thoughts. This seemed so natural, that Maud wondered she too could not feel all this absorbing interest in the child, a being so totally dependent on the affection of its friends and relatives to provide for its wants and hazards in an emergency like the present.

"We will see to the child, Maud," observed her mother, ten or fifteen minutes after all were up and dressed. "Do you go to your brother, who will be solitary, alone in his citadel. He may wish, too, to send some message to his father. Go, then, dear girl, and help to keep up poor Bob's spirits."

What a service for Maud! Still, she went, without hesitation or delay; for the habits of her whole infancy were not to be totally overcome by the natural and more engrossing sentiments of her later years. She could not feel precisely the reserve and self-distrust with one she had so long regarded as a brother, as might have been the case with a stranger youth in whom she had begun to feel the interest she entertained for Robert Willoughby. But

Maud did not hesitate about complying. An order from her mother to her was law; and she had no shame, no reserves on the subject of contributing to Bob's comfort or happiness.

Her presence was a great relief to the young man himself, whom she found in the library. His assistants were posted without, as sentinels to keep off intruders, a disposition that left him quite alone, anxious and uneasy. The only intercourse he could have with his father was by means of messages; and the part of the building he occupied, was absolutely without any communication with the court, except by a single door near the offices, at which he had stationed O'Hearn.

"This is kind, and like yourself, dearest Maud," exclaimed the young man, taking the hand of his visitor, and pressing it in both his own, though he strangely neglected to kiss her cheek, as he certainly would have done had it been Beulah, "this is kind and like yourself; now I shall learn something of the state of the family. How is my mother?"

It might have been native coyness, or even coquetry, that unconsciously to herself influenced Maud's answer. She knew not why — and yet she felt prompted to let it be understood she had not come of her own impulses.

"Mother is well, and not at all alarmed," she said. "She and Beulah are busy with little Evert, who crows and kicks his heels about as if he despised danger as becomes a soldier's son, and has much amused even me; though I am accused of insensibility to his perfections. Believing you might be solitary, or might wish to communicate with some of us, my mother desired me to come and inquire into your wants."

"Was such a bidding required, Maud? How long has an order been necessary to bring you to console me?"

"That is a calculation I have never entered into, Bob," answered Maud, slightly blushing and openly smiling, and that in a way, too, to take all the sting out of her words, "as young ladies can have more suitable occupations, one might think. You will admit I guided you faithfully and

skillfully into the Hut last evening, and such a service should suffice for the present. But my mother tells me we have proper cause of complaint against you, for having so thoughtlessly left the place of safety into which you were brought, and for going strolling about the valley, after we had retired, in a very heedless and boyish manner!"

"I went with my father; surely I could not have been in better company!"

"At his suggestion, or at your own, Bob?" asked Maud, shaking her head.

"To own the truth, it was, in some degree, at my own. It seemed so very unmilitary for two old soldiers to allow themselves to be shut up in ignorance of what their enemies were at, that I could not resist the desire to make a little *sortie*. You must feel, dear Maud, that our motive was your safety — the safety, I mean, of my mother, and Beulah, and all of you together — and you ought to be the last to blame us."

The tint on Maud's cheek deepened as Robert Willoughby laid so heavy an emphasis on "your safety;" but she could not smile on an act that risked so much more than was prudent.

"This is well enough as to motive," she said, after a pause; "but frightfully ill-judged, I should think, as to the risks. You do not remember the importance our dear father is to us all — to my mother — to Beulah — even to me, Bob."

"Even to you, Maud! And why not as much to you as to any of us?"

Maud could speak to Beulah of her want of natural affinity to the family; but it far exceeded her self-command to make a direct allusion to it to Robert Willoughby. Still, it was now rarely absent from her mind; the love she bore the captain and his wife, and Beulah, and little Evert, coming to her heart through a more insidious and possibly tenderer tie than that of purely filial or sisterly affection. It was, indeed, this every-day regard, strangely deepened and enlivened by that collateral

feeling we so freely bestow on them who are bound by natural ties to those who have the strongest holds on our hearts, and which causes us to see with their eyes, and to feel with their affections. Accordingly, no reply was made to the question; or, rather, it was answered by putting another.

"Did you see anything, after all, to compensate for so much risk?" asked Maud, but not until a pause had betrayed her embarrassment.

"We ascertained that the savages had deserted their fires, and had not entered any of the cabins. Whether this were done to mislead us, or to make a retreat as sudden and unexpected as their inroad, we are altogether in the dark. My father apprehends treachery, however; while, I confess, to me it seems probable that the arrival and the departure may be altogether matters of accident. The Indians are in motion certainly, for it is known that our agents are busy among them; but it is by no means so clear that our Indians would molest Captain Willoughby, — Sir Hugh Willoughby, as my father is altogether called, at headquarters."

"Have not the Americans savages on their side, to do us this ill office?"

"I think not. It is the interest of the rebels to keep the savages out of the struggle; they have so much at risk, that this species of warfare can scarcely be to their liking."

"And ought it to be to the liking of the king's generals, or ministers either, Bob?"

"Perhaps not, Maud. I do not defend it; but I have seen enough of politics and war, to know that results are looked to, far more than principles. Honor, and chivalry, and humanity, and virtue, and right are freely used in terms; but seldom do they produce much influence on facts. Victory is the end aimed at, and the means are made to vary with the object."

"And where is all we have read together? Yes, together, Bob? for I owe you a great deal for having directed my studies — where is all we have read about the glory and truth of the English name and cause?"

"Very much, I fear, Maud, where the glory and truth of the American name and cause will be, as soon as this new nation shall fairly burst the shell, and hatch its public morality. There are men among us who believe in this public honesty, but I do not."

"You are then engaged in a bad cause, Major Willoughby, and the sooner you abandon it the better."

"I would in a minute, if I knew where to find a better. Rely on it, dearest Maud, all causes are alike, in this particular; though one side may employ instruments, as in the case of the savages, that the other side finds it its interest to decry. Men, as individuals, may be, and sometimes are, reasonably upright — but bodies of men, I much fear, never. The latter escape responsibility by dividing it."

"Still, a good cause may elevate even bodies of men," said Maud thoughtfully.

"For a time, perhaps, but not in emergencies. You and I think it a good cause, my good and frowning Maud, to defend the rights of our sovereign lord the king. Beulah I have given up to the enemy; but on you I have implicitly relied."

"Beulah follows her heart, perhaps, as they say it is natural to women to do. As for myself, I am left free to follow my own opinion of my duties."

"And they lead you to espouse the cause of the king, Maud?"

"They will be very apt to be influenced by the notions of a certain Captain Willoughby, and Wilhelmina, his wife, who have guided me aright on so many occasions, that I shall not easily distrust their opinions on this."

The major disliked this answer; and yet when he came to reflect on it, as reflect he did a good deal in the course of the day, he was dissatisfied with himself at being so unreasonable as to expect a girl of twenty-one not to think with her parents, real or presumed, in most matters. At the moment, however, he did not wish further to press the point.

"I am glad to learn, Bob," resumed Maud, looking

more cheerful and smiling, "that you met with no one in your rash sortie — for rash I shall call it, even though sanctioned by my father."

"I am wrong in saying that. We did meet with one man, and that was no less a person than your bugbear, Joel Strides — as innocent, though as meddling an overseer as one could wish to employ."

"Robert Willoughby, what mean you! Does this man know of your presence at the Knoll?"

"I should hope not — think not." Here the major explained all that is known to the reader on this head, when he continued: "The fellow's curiosity brought his face within a few inches of mine; yet I do not believe he recognized me. This disguise is pretty thorough; and what between his ignorance, the darkness, and the dress, I must believe he was foiled."

"Heaven be praised!" exclaimed Maud, breathing more freely. "I have long distrusted that man, though he seems to possess the confidence of every one else. Neither my father nor my mother will see him as I see him; yet to me his design to injure you is so clear — so obvious! I wonder, often wonder, that others cannot view it as I do. Even Beulah is blind!"

"And what do you see so clearly, Maud? I have consented to keep myself *incog.* in submission to your earnest request; and yet, to own the truth, I can discover no particular reason why Strides is to be distrusted more than any one else in the valley — than Mike, for instance."

"Mike! I would answer for his truth with my life. He will never betray you, Bob."

"But why is Joel so much the object of your distrust? — and why am I the particular subject of your apprehensions?"

Maud felt the tell-tale blood flowing again to her cheeks; since to give a simple and clear reason for her distrust exceeded her power. It was nothing but the keen interest which she took in Robert Willoughby's safety that had betrayed to her the truth; and as usually happens, when anxiety leads the way in discoveries of this sort, logical and

plausible inferences are not always at command. Still, Maud not only thought herself right, but, in the main, she was right; and this she felt so strongly as to be enabled to induce others to act on her impressions.

"Why I believe in Strides's sinister views is more than I may be able to explain to you in words, Bob," she replied, after a moment's thought; "still, I do believe in them as firmly as I believe in my existence. His looks, his questions, his journeys, and an occasional remark, have all aided in influencing the belief; nevertheless, no one proof may be perfectly clear and satisfactory. Why you should be the subject of his plans, however, is simple enough, since you are the only one among us he can seriously injure. By betraying you, he might gain some great advantage to himself."

"To whom can he betray me, dear? My father is the only person here in any authority, and of him I have no cause to be afraid."

"Yet you were so far alarmed when last here, as to change your route back to Boston. If there were cause for apprehension then, the same reason may now exist."

"That was when many strangers were in the valley, and we knew not exactly where we stood. I have submitted to your wishes, however, Maud, and shall lie *perdu* until there is a serious alarm; then it is understood I am to be permitted to show myself. In a moment of emergency my unexpected appearance among the men might have a dramatic effect, and, of itself, give us a victory. But tell me of my prospects — am I likely to succeed with my father? Will he be brought over to the royal cause?"

"I think not. All common inducements are lost on him. His baronetcy, for instance, he will never assume; that, therefore, cannot entice him. Then his feelings are with his adopted country, which he thinks right, and which he is much disposed to maintain; more particularly since Beulah's marriage, and our late intercourse with all that set. My mother's family, too, has much influence with him. They, you know, are all whigs."

"Don't prostitute the name, Maud. Whig does not mean

rebel; these misguided men are neither more nor less than rebels. I had thought this declaration of independence would have brought my father at once to our side."

"I can see it has disturbed him, as did the Battle of Bunker's Hill. But he will reflect a few days, and decide now, as he did then, in favor of the Americans. He has English partialities, Bob, as is natural to one born in that country; but, on this point, his mind is very strongly American."

"The accursed Knoll has done this! Had he lived in society, as he ought to have done, among his equals and the educated, we should now see him at the head — Maud, I know I can confide in you."

Maud was pleased at this expression of confidence, and she looked up in the major's face, her full blue eyes expressing no small portion of the heartfelt satisfaction she experienced. Still she said nothing.

"You may well imagine," the major continued, "that I have not made this journey entirely without an object — I mean some object more important, even, than to see you all. The commander-in-chief is empowered to raise several regiments in this country, and it is thought useful to put men of influence in the colonies at their head. Old Noll de Lancey, for instance, so well known to us all, is to have a brigade; and I have a letter in my pocket offering to Sir Hugh Willoughby one of his regiments. One of the Allens of Pennsylvania, who was actually serving against us, has thrown up his commission from Congress, since this wicked declaration, and has consented to take a battalion from the king. What think you of all this? Will it not have weight with my father?"

"It may cause him to reflect, Bob; but it will not induce him to change his mind. It may suit Mr. Oliver de Lancey to be a general, for he has been a soldier his whole life; but my father has retired, and given up all thoughts of service. He tells us he never liked it, and has been happier here at the Knoll than when he got his first commission. Mr. Allen's change of opinion may be well enough, he will say, but I have no need of change; I am here, with my wife

and daughters. and have them to care for in these troubled times. What think you he said, Bob, in one of his conversations with us, on this very subject?"

"I am sure I cannot imagine — though I rather fear it was some wretched political stuff of the day."

"So far from this, it was good natural feeling that belongs, or ought to belong, to all days and all ages," answered Maud, her voice trembling a little as she proceeded. "'There is my son,' he said; 'one soldier is enough in a family like this. He keeps all our hearts anxious, and may cause them all to mourn.'"

Major Willoughby was mute for quite a minute, looking rebuked and thoughtful.

"I feel I do cause my parents concern," he at length answered; "and why should I endeavor to increase that of my excellent mother, by persuading her husband to return to the profession? If this were ordinary service I could not think of it. I do not know that I ought to think of it as it is!"

"Do not, dear Robert. We are all — that is, mother is often miserable on your account; and why would you increase her sorrows? Remember, that to tremble for one life is sufficient for a woman."

"My mother is miserable on my account!" answered the young man, who was thinking of anything but his father at that instant. "Does Beulah never express concern for me? or have her new ties completely driven her brother from her recollection? I know she can scarce wish me success; but she might still feel some uneasiness for an only brother. We are but two"—

Maud started, as if some frightful object glared before her eyes; then she sat in breathless silence, resolute to hear what would come next. But Robert Willoughby meant to pursue that idea no further. He had so accustomed himself — had endeavored even so to accustom himself to think of Beulah as his only sister, that the words escaped him unconsciously. They were no sooner uttered, however, than the recollection of their possible effect on Maud crossed his mind. Profoundly ignorant of the true nature of her feel

ings towards himself, he had ever shrunk from a direct avowal of his own sentiments, lest he might shock her; as a sister's ear would naturally be wounded by a declaration of attachment from a brother; and there were bitter moments when he fancied delicacy and honor would oblige him to carry his secret with him to the grave. Two minutes of frank communication might have dissipated all these scruples forever; but how to obtain those minutes, or how to enter on the subject at all, were obstacles that often appeared insurmountable to the young man. As for Maud, she but imperfectly understood her own heart; true, she had conscious glimpses of its real state; but it was through those sudden and ungovernable impulses that were so strangely mingled with her affections. It was years, indeed, since she had ceased to think of Robert Willoughby as a brother, and had begun to view him with different eyes; still she struggled with her feelings, as against a weakness. The captain and his wife were her parents; Beulah her dearly, dearly beloved sister; little Evert her nephew; and even the collaterals in and about Albany came in for a due share of her regard: while Bob, though called Bob as before, though treated with a large portion of the confidence that was natural to the intimacy of her childhood, though loved with a tenderness he would have given even his high-prized commission to know, was no longer thought of as a brother. Often did Maud find herself thinking, if never saying, "Beulah may do that, for Beulah is his sister; but it would be wrong in me. I may write to him, talk freely and even confidentially with him, and be affectionate to him; all this is right, and I should be the most ungrateful creature on earth to act differently; but I cannot sit on his knee, as Beulah sometimes does; I cannot throw my arms around his neck when I kiss him, as Beulah does; I cannot pat his cheek as Beulah does, when he says anything to laugh at; nor can I pry into his secrets as Beulah does, or affects to do, to tease him. I should be more reserved with one who has not a drop of my blood in his veins — no, not a single drop." In this way, indeed, Maud was rather fond of disclaiming any consanguinity with the family of Willoughby, even while she

honored and loved its two heads as parents. The long pause that succeeded the major's broken sentence was only interrupted by himself.

"It is vexatious to be shut up here, in the dark, Maud," he said, "when every minute may bring an attack. This side of the house might be defended by you and Beulah, aided and enlightened by the arm and counsels of that young 'son of liberty,' little Evert; whereas the stockade in front may really need the presence of men who have some knowledge of the noble art. I wish there were a lookout to the front, that one might at least see the danger as it approached."

"If your presence is not indispensable here, I can lead you to my painting-room, where there is a loop directly opposite to the gate. That half of the garrets has no one in it."

The major accepted the proposal with joy, and forthwith he proceeded to issue a few necessary orders to his subordinates, before he followed Maud. When all was ready, the latter led the way, carrying a small silver lamp that she had brought with her on entering the library. The reader already understands that the Hut was built around a court; the portion of the building in the rear, or on the cliff, alone having windows that opened outwards. This was as true of the roofs as of the perpendicular parts of the structure, the only exceptions being in the loops that had been cut in the half story beneath the eaves. Of course the garrets were very extensive. They were occupied in part, however, by small rooms with dormer-windows, the latter of which opened on the court, with the exception of those above the cliff. It was on the roofs of these windows that Captain Willoughby had laid his platform or walk, with a view to extinguish fires or to defend the place. There were many rooms also that were lighted only by the loops, and which, of course, were on the outer side of the buildings. In addition to these arrangements, the garret portions of the Hut were divided into two great parts, like the lower floor, without any doors of communication. Thus, below, the apartments commenced at the gateway, and extended alon

half the front; the whole of the east wing, and the whole of the rear, occupying five eighths of the entire structure. This part contained all the rooms occupied by the family and the offices. The corresponding three eighths, or the remaining half of the front, and the whole of the west wing, were given to visitors, and were now in possession of the people of the valley; as were all the rooms and garrets above them. On the other hand, Captain Willoughby, with a view to keep his family to itself, had excluded every one but the usual inmates from his own portion of the house, garret rooms included.

Some of the garret rooms, particularly those over the library, drawing-room, and parlor, were convenient and well furnished little apartments, enjoying dormer-windows that opened on the meadows and forest, and possessing a very tolerable elevation, for rooms of that particular construction. Here Mr. Woods lodged and had his study. The access was by a convenient flight of steps, placed in the vestibule that communicated with the court. A private and narrower flight also ascended from the offices.

Maud now led the way up the principal stairs, Mike being on post at the outer door to keep off impertinent eyes, followed by Robert Willoughby. Unlike most American houses, the Hut had few passages on its principal floor; the rooms communicating *en suite*, as a better arrangement where the buildings were so long, and yet so narrow. Above, however, one side was left in open garret; sometimes in front and sometimes in the rear, as the light came from the court, or from without. Into this garret, then, Maud conducted the major, passing a line of humble rooms on her right, which belonged to the families of the Plinies and the Smashes, with their connections, until she reached the front range of the buildings. Here the order was changed along the half of the structure reserved to the use of the family; the rooms being on the outer side lighted merely by the loops, while opposite to them was an open garret with windows that overlooked the court.

Passing into the garret just mentioned, Maud soon reached the door of the little room she sought. It was an apart-

ment she had selected for painting, on accoun
from the loop, which in the morning was particula
able, though somewhat low. As she usually sat on a
stool, however, this difficulty was in some measure obviated;
and, at all events, the place was made to answer her purposes. She kept the key herself, and the room, since Beulah's marriage in particular, was her sanctum; no one entering it unless conducted by its mistress. Occasionally, Little Smash was admitted with a broom; though Maud, for reasons known to herself, often preferred sweeping the small carpet that covered the centre of the floor with her own fair hands, in preference to suffering another to intrude.

The major was aware that Maud had used this room for the last seven years. It was here he had seen her handkerchief waving at the loop, when he last departed; and hundreds of times since had he thought of this act of watchful affection, with doubts that led equally to pain or pleasure, as images of merely sisterly care, or of a tenderer feeling, obtruded themselves. These loops were four feet long, cut in the usual beveling manner, through the massive timbers; were glazed, and had thick, bullet-proof inside shutters, that in this room were divided into equal parts, in order to give Maud the proper use of the light she wanted. All these shutters were now closed by command of the captain, in order to conceal the lights that would be flickering through the different garrets; and so far had caution become a habit, that Maud seldom exposed her person at night, near the loop, with the shutter open.

On the present occasion, she left the light without, and threw open the upper half of her heavy shutter, remarking, as she did so, that the day was just beginning to dawn.

"In a few minutes it will be light," she added; "then we shall be able to see who is and who is not in the valley. Look — you can perceive my father near the gate, at this moment."

"I do, to my shame, Maud. He should not be there, while I am cooped up here, behind timbers that are almost shot-proof."

"It will be time for you to go to the front, as [illegible]

diers call it, when there is an enemy to face. You cannot think there is any danger of an attack upon the Hut this morning."

"Certainly not. It is now too late. If intended at all, it would have been made before that streak of light appeared in the east."

"Then close the shutter, and I will bring in the lamp, and show you some of my sketches. We artists are thirsting always for praise; and I know you have a taste, Bob, that one might dread."

"This is kind of you, dear Maud," answered the major, closing the shutter; "for they tell me you are niggardly of bestowing such favors. I hear you have got to likenesses — little Evert's, in particular."

CHAPTER XVI.

Anxious, she hovers o'er the web the while,
Reads, as it grows, thy figured story there;
Now she explains the texture with a smile,
And now the woof interprets with a tear.

FAWCETT.

All Maud's feelings were healthful and natural. She had no exaggerated sentiments, and scarcely art enough to control or to conceal any of the ordinary impulses of her heart. We are not about to relate a scene, therefore, in which a long-cherished but hidden miniature of the young man is to play a conspicuous part, and to be the means of revealing to two lovers the state of their respective hearts; but one of a very different character. It is true, Maud had endeavored to make, from memory, one or two sketches of "Bob's" face; but she had done it openly, and under the cognizance of the whole family. This she might very well do indeed, in her usual character of a sister, and excite no comments. In these efforts, her father and mother, and Beulah, had uniformly pronounced her success to be far beyond their hopes; but Maud, herself, had thrown them all aside, half-finished, dissatisfied with her own labors. Like the author, whose fertile imagination fancies pictures that defy his powers of description, her pencil ever fell far short of the face that her memory kept so constantly in view. This sketch wanted animation, that gentleness, another fire, and a fourth candor; in short, had Maud begun a thousand, all would have been deficient, in her eyes, in some great essential of perfection. Still, she had no secret about her efforts, and half a dozen of these very sketches lay uppermost in her portfolio, when she spread it, and its contents before the eyes of the original.

Major Willoughby thought Maud had never appeared

more beautiful than as she moved about making her little preparations for the exhibition. Pleasure heightened her color; and there was such a mixture of frank, sisterly regard, in every glance of her eye, blended, however, with sensitive feeling and conscious womanly reserve, as made her a thousand times — measuring amounts by the young man's sensations — more interesting than he had ever seen her The lamp gave but an indifferent light for a gallery, but it was sufficient to betray Maud's smiles and blushes, and each varying emotion of her charming countenance.

"Now, Bob," she said, opening her portfolio, with all her youthful frankness and confidence, "you know well enough I am not one of those old masters of whom you used to talk so much, but your own pupil — the work of your own hands; and if you find more faults than you have expected, you will have the goodness to remember that the master has deserted his peaceful pursuits to go a-campaigning — there — that is a caricature of your own countenance, staring you in the face, as a preface!"

"This is like, I should think — was it done from memory, dear Maud?"

"How else should it be done? All our entreaties have never been able to persuade you to send us even a miniature. You are wrong in this, Bob" — by no accident did Maud now ever call the major, Robert, though Beulah often did. There was a desperate sort of familiarity in the Bob, that she could easily adopt; but the "Robert" had a family sound that she disliked; and yet a more truly feminine creature than Maud Meredith did not exist — "you are wrong, Bob; for mother actually pines to possess your picture, in some shape or other. It was this wish that induced me to attempt these things."

"And why has no one of them ever been finished? Here are six or eight beginnings, and all more or less like, I should think, and not one of them more than half done. Why have I been treated so cavalierly, Miss Maud?"

The fair artist's color deepened a little; but her smile was quite as sweet as it was saucy, as she replied, —

"Girlish caprice, I suppose. I like neither of them

and of that which a woman dislikes, she will have none. To be candid, however, I hardly think there is one of them all that does you justice."

"No? — what fault have you to find with this? This might be worked up to something very natural."

"It would be a natural, then — it wants expression fearfully."

"And this, which is still better. That might be finished while I am here, and I will give you some sittings."

"Even mother dislikes that — there is too much of the Major of Foot in it. Mr. Woods says it is a martial picture."

"And ought not a soldier to look like a soldier? To me, now, that seems a capital beginning."

"It is not what mother, or Beulah — or father — or even any of us wants. It is too full of Bunker's Hill. Your friends desire to see you as you appear to them; not as you appear to your enemies."

"Upon my word, Maud, you have made great advances in the art! This is a view of the Knoll, and the dam — and here is another of the mill, and the water-fall — all beautifully done, and in water-colors too. What is this? — Have you been attempting a sketch of yourself! — The glass must have been closely consulted, my fair coquette, to enable you to do this!"

The blood had rushed into Maud's face, covering it with a rich tell-tale mantle, when her companion first alluded to the half-finished miniature held in his hand; then her features resembled ivory, as the revulsion of feeling that overcame her confusion, followed. For some little time she sat, in breathless stillness, with her looks cast upon the floor, conscious that Robert Willoughby was glancing from her own face to the miniature, and from the miniature to her face again, making his observations and comparisons. Then she ventured to raise her eyes timidly towards his, half-imploringly, as if to beseech him to proceed to something else. But the young man was too much engrossed with the exceedingly pretty sketch he held in his hand, to understand her meaning, or to comply with her wishes.

"This is yourself, Maud!" he cried — "though in

strange sort of dress — why have you spoilt so beautiful a thing by putting it in this masquerade?"

"It is not myself — it is a copy of — a miniature I possess."

"A miniature you possess! Of whom can you possess so lovely a miniature, and I never see it?"

A faint smile illumined the countenance of Maud, and the blood began to return to her cheeks. She stretched her hand over to the sketch, and gazed on it with intense feeling, until the tears began to stream from her eyes.

"Maud — dear, dearest Maud — have I said that which pains you? I do not understand all this, but I confess there are secrets to which I can have no claim to be admitted" —

"Nay, Bob, this is making too much of what, after all, must sooner or later be spoken of openly among us. I believe that to be a copy of a miniature of my mother."

"Of mother, Maud — you are beside yourself — it has neither her features, expression, nor the color of her eyes. It is the picture of a far handsomer woman, though mother is still pretty; and it is perfection!"

"I mean of my mother — of Maud Yeardley; the wife of my father, Major Meredith."

This was said with a steadiness that surprised our heroine herself, when she came to think over all that had passed, and it brought the blood to her companion's heart in a torrent.

"This is strange!" exclaimed Willoughby, after a short pause. "And my mother — our mother has given you the original and told you this? I did not believe she could muster the resolution necessary to such an act."

"She has not. You know, Bob, I am now of age; and my father a month since put some papers into my hand, with a request that I would read them. They contain a marriage settlement and other things of that sort, which show I am mistress of more money than I should know what to do with if it were not for dear little Evert — but with such a precious being to love, one never can have too co[illegible]ch of anything. With the papers were many trinkets,

which I suppose father never looked at. This beautiful miniature was among the last; and I feel certain, from some remarks I ventured to make, mother does not know of its existence."

As Maud spoke, she drew the original from her bosom and placed it in Robert Willoughby's hands. When this simple act was performed her mind seemed relieved; and she waited with strong natural interest to hear Robert Willoughby's comments.

"This then, Maud, was your own — your real mother!" the young man said, after studying the miniature with a thoughtful countenance for near a minute. "It is like her — like you."

"Like her, Bob? How can you know anything of that? I suppose it to be my mother because I think it like myself, and because it is not easy to say who else it can be. But you cannot know anything of this?"

"You are mistaken, Maud; I remember both your parents well — it could not be otherwise, as they were the bosom friends of my own. You will remember that I am now eight-and-twenty, and that I had seen seven of these years when you were born. Was my first effort in arms never spoken of in your presence?"

"Never; perhaps it was not a subject for me to hear, if it were in any manner connected with my parents."

"You are right; that must be the reason it has been kept from your ears."

"Surely, surely, I am old enough to hear it now; you will conceal nothing from me, Bob?"

"If I would, I could not now. It is too late, Maud. You know the manner in which Major Meredith died?"

"He fell in battle, I have suspected," answered the daughter in a suppressed, doubtful tone, "for no one has ever directly told me even that."

"He did, and I was at his side. The French and savages made an assault on us about an hour earlier than this, and our two fathers rushed to the pickets to repel it; I was a reckless boy, anxious even at that tender age to see a fray, and was at their side. Your father was one of the

first that fell; but Joyce and our father beat the Indians back from his body, and saved it from mutilation. Your mother was buried in the same grave, and then you came to us, where you have been ever since."

Maud's tears flowed fast, and yet it was not so much in grief as in a gush of tenderness she could hardly explain to herself. Robert Willoughby understood her emotions, and perceived that he might proceed.

"I was old enough to remember both your parents well; I was a favorite, I believe, with, certainly was much petted by, both. I remember your birth, Maud, and was suffered to carry you in my arms ere you were a week old."

"Then you have known me for an impostor from the beginning, Bob — must have often thought of me as such!"

"I have known you for the daughter of Lewellen Meredith, certainly; and not for the world would I have you the real child of Hugh Willoughby" —

"Bob!" exclaimed Maud, her heart beating violently, a rush of feeling nearly overcoming her, in which alarm, consciousness, her own secret, dread of something wrong, and a confused glimpse of the truth, were all so blended, as nearly to deprive her, for the moment, of the use of her senses.

It is not easy to say precisely what would have followed this tolerably explicit insight into the state of the young man's feelings, had not an outcry on the lawn given the major notice that his presence was needed below. With a few words of encouragement to Maud, first taking the precaution to extinguish the lamp, lest its light should expose her to a shot in passing some of the open loops, he sprang towards the stairs, and was at his post again literally in a minute. Nor was he a moment too soon. The alarm was general, and it was understood an assault was momentarily expected.

The situation of Robert Willoughby was now tantalizing in the extreme. Ignorant of what was going on in front, he saw no enemy in the rear to oppose, and was condemned to inaction, at a moment when he felt that, by training, years, affinity to the master of the place, and all the usual

considerations, he ought to be in front, opposed to the enemy. It is probable he would have forgotten his many cautions to keep close, had not Maud appeared in the library, and implored him to remain concealed, at least until there was the certainty his presence was necessary elsewhere.

At that instant every feeling but those connected with the danger was in a degree forgotten. Still, Willoughby had enough consideration for Maud to insist on her joining her mother and Beulah, in the portion of the building where the absence of external windows rendered their security complete so long as the foe could be kept without the palisades. In this he succeeded, but not until he had promised, again and again, to be cautious in not exposing himself at any of the windows, the day having now fairly dawned, and particularly not to let it be known in the Hut that he was present, until it became indispensable.

The major felt relieved when Maud had left him. For her, he had no longer any immediate apprehensions, and he turned all his faculties to the sounds of the assault which he supposed to be going on in front. To his surprise, however, no discharges of fire-arms succeeded; and even the cries, and orders, and calling from point to point, that are a little apt to succeed an alarm in an irregular garrison, had entirely ceased; and it became doubtful whether the whole commotion did not proceed from a false alarm. The Smashes, in particular, whose vociferations for the first few minutes had been of a very decided kind, were now mute; and the exclamations of the women and children had ceased.

Major Willoughby was too good a soldier to abandon his post without orders, though bitterly did he regret the facility with which he had consented to accept so inconsiderable a command. He so far disregarded his instructions, however, as to place his whole person before a window, in order to reconnoitre; for it was now broad daylight, though the sun had not yet risen. Nothing rewarded this careless exposure, and then it flashed upon his mind that, as the commander of a separate detachment, he had

a perfect right to employ any of his immediate subordinates, either as messengers or scouts. His choice of an agent was somewhat limited, it is true, lying between Mike and the Plinies; after a moment of reflection, he determined to choose the former.

Mike was duly relieved from his station at the door, the younger Pliny being substituted for him, and he was led into the library. Here he received hasty but clear orders from the major how he was to proceed, and was thrust, rather than conducted, from the room, in his superior's haste to hear the tidings. Three or four minutes might have elapsed, when an irregular volley of musketry was heard in front; then succeeded an answering discharge, which sounded smothered and distant. A single musket came from the garrison a minute later, and then Mike rushed into the library, his eyes dilated with a sort of wild delight, dragging rather than carrying his piece after him.

"The news!" exclaimed the major, as soon as he got a glimpse of his messenger. "What mean these volleys, and how comes on my father in front?"

"Is it what do they mane?" answered Mike. "Well, there's but one m'aning to powther and ball, and that's far more sarious than shillelah wo-r-r-k. If the rapscallions didn't fire a whole plathoon, as Sergeant Joyce calls it, right at the Knoll, my name is not Michael O'Hearn, or my nature one that dales in giving back as good as I get."

"But the volley came first from the house; why did my father order his people to make the first discharge?"

"For the same r'ason that he didn't. Och! there was a big frown on his f'atures when he heard the rifles and muskets; and Mr. Woods never pr'ached more to the purpose than the sergeant himself agin that same. But to think of them rapscallions answering a fire that was agin orders! Not a word did his honor say about shooting any of them, and they just pulled their triggers on the house all the same as if it had been logs growing in senseless and uninhabited trees, instead of a rational and well p'apled abode. Och! aren't they vagabonds!"

"If you do not wish to drive me mad, man, tell me clearly what has passed, that I may understand you."

"Is it understand that's wanting? Lord, yer honor, if ye can understand that Misther Sthrides, that's yon, ye'll be a wise man. He calls hisself a son of the poor'atins,' and poor 'ating it must have been, in the counthry of his faders, to have produced so lane and skinny a baste as that same. The orders was as partic'lar as tongue of man could utter, and what good will it all do? Ye're not to fire, says Sergeant Joyce, till ye all hear the wor-r-d; and the divil of a wor-r-d did they wait for; but blaze away did they, jist beca-ase a knot of savages come on to them rocks ag'in, where they had possession all yesterday afthernoon; and sure it is common enough to breakfast where a man sups."

"You mean to say that the Indians have reappeared on the rocks, and that some of Strides's men fired at them without orders? Is that the history of the affair?"

"It's jist that, majjor; and little good, or little har-r-m, did it do. Joel, and his poor'atins, blazed away at 'em, as if they had been so many Christians; and 'twould have done yer heart good to have heard the sergeant belabor them with hard wor-r-ds for their throuble. There's none of the poor'atin' family in the sergeant, who's a mighty man wid his tongue."

"And the savages returned the volley — which explains the distant discharge I heard."

"Anybody can see, majjor, that ye're yer father's son, and a souldier bor-r-n. Och! who would of t'ought of that, but one bred and bor-r-n in the army? Yes; the savages sent back as good as they got, which was jist not'in' at all, seein' that no one is har-r-med."

"And the single piece that followed — there was one discharge by itself?"

Mike opened his mouth with a grin that might have put either of the Plinies to shame, it being rather a favorite theory with the descendants of the Puritans — or "poor-'atins," as the county Leitrim-man called Joel and his set — that the Irishman was more than a match for any son of

Ham at the Knoll, in the way of capacity about this portion of the human countenance. The major saw that there was a good deal of self-felicitation in the expression of Mike's visage, and he demanded an explanation in more direct terms.

"'Twas I did it, majjor, and 'twas as well fired a piece as ye've ever hear-r-d in the king's sarvice. Divil bur-r-n me, if I lets Joel get any such advantage over me, as to have a whole battle to himself. No, no; as soon as I smelt his Yankee powther, and could get my own musket cocked, and pointed out of the forthifications, I lets 'em have it, as if it had been so much breakfast ready cooked to their hands. 'Twas well pointed, too; for I'm not the man to shoot into a fri'nd's countenance."

"And you broke the orders for a reason no better than the fact that Strides had broken them before?"

"Divil a bit, majjor — Joel had broken the orders, ye see, and that settled the matter. The thing that is once broken is broken, and wor-r-ds can't mend it, any more than forbearin' to fire a gun will mend it."

By dint of cross-questioning, Robert Willoughby finally succeeded in getting something like an outline of the truth from Mike. The simple facts were, that the Indians had taken possession of their old bivouac, as soon as the day dawned, and had commenced their preparations for breakfast, when Joel, the miller, and a few of that set, in a paroxysm of valor, had discharged a harmless volley at them, the distance rendering the attempt futile. This fire had been partially returned, the whole concluding with the finale from the Irishman's gun, as has been related. As it was now too light to apprehend a surprise, and the ground in front of the palisade had no very dangerous covers, Robert Willoughby was emboldened to send one of the Plinies to request an interview with his father. In a few minutes the latter appeared, accompanied by Mr. Woods.

"The same party has reappeared, and seems disposed to occupy its old position near the mill," said the captain, in answer to his son's inquiries. "It is difficult to say what

the fellows have in view; and there are moments when I think there are more or less whites among them. I suggested as much to Strides, chaplain; and I thought the fellow appeared to receive the notion as if he thought it might be true."

"Joel is a little of an enigma to me, Captain Willoughby," returned the chaplain; "sometimes seizing an idea like a cat pouncing upon a rat, and then coquetting with it, as the same cat will play with a mouse, when it has no appetite for food."

"Och! he's a precious poor'atin'!" growled Mike, from his corner of the room.

"If whites are among the savages, why should they not make themselves known?" demanded Robert Willoughby. "Your character, sir, is no secret; and they must be acquainted with their own errand here."

"I will send for Strides, and get his opinion a little more freely," answered the captain, after a moment of deliberation. "You will withdraw, Bob; though, by leaving your door a little ajar the conversation will reach you and prevent the necessity of a repetition."

As Robert Willoughby was not unwilling to hear what the overseer might have to say in the present state of things, he did not hesitate about complying, withdrawing into his own room, as requested, and leaving the door ajar, in a way to prevent suspicion of his presence as far as possible. But Joel Strides, like all bad men, ever suspected the worst. The innocent and pure of mind alone are without distrust; while one constituted morally like the overseer, never permitted his thoughts to remain in the tranquillity that is a fruit of confidence. Conscious of his own evil intentions, his very nature put on armor against the same species of machinations in others, as the hedgehog rolls himself into a ball, and thrusts out his quills at the sight of the dog. Had not Captain Willoughby been one of those who are slow to see evil, he might have detected something wrong in Joel's feelings, by the very first glance he cast about him on entering the library.

In point of fact, Strides's thoughts had not been idle since the rencontre of the previous night. Inquisitive, and under none of the usual restraints of delicacy, he had already probed all he dared approach on the subject; and by this time had become perfectly assured that there was some mystery about the unknown individual whom he had met in his master's company. To own the truth, Joel did not suspect that Major Willoughby had again ventured so far into the lion's den; but he fancied that some secret agent of the crown was at the Hut, and that the circumstance offered a fair opening for helping the captain down the ladder of public favor, and to push himself up a few of its rounds. He was not sorry, therefore, to be summoned to this conference, hoping it might lead to some opening for further discoveries.

"Sit down, Strides," said Captain Willoughby, motioning towards a chair, so distant from the open door of the bedroom, and so placed as to remove the danger of too close a proximity. "Sit down — I wish to consult you about the state of things towards the mills. To me it seems as if there were more pale-faces than red-skins among our visitors."

"That's not onlikely, captain; the people has got to be greatly given to paintin' and imitatin', sin' the hatchet has been dug up agin the British. The tea-boys were all in Indian fashion."

"True; but why should white men assume such a disguise to come to the Knoll? I am not conscious of having an enemy on earth who could meditate harm to me or mine."

Alas! poor captain. That a man at sixty should yet have to learn that the honest, and fair-dealing, and plain-dealing, and affluent — for Captain Willoughby was affluent in the eyes of those around him — that such a man should imagine he was without enemies, was to infer that the Spirit of Darkness had ceased to exercise his functions among men. Joel knew better, though he did not perceive any necessity, just then, for letting the fact reach the ears of the party principally concerned.

"A body might s'pose the captain was pop'lar, if any man is pop'lar," answered the overseer; "nor do I know that visitors in paint betoken onpopularity to a person in these times more than another. May I ask why the captain consaits these Injins ain't Injins? To me they have a desperate savage look, though I ain't much accustomed to red-skin usages."

"Their movements are too open, and yet too uncertain, for warriors of the tribes. I think a savage, by this time, would have made up his mind to act as friend or foe."

Joel seemed struck with the idea; and the expression of his countenance, which on entering had been wily, distrustful, and prying, suddenly changed to that of deep reflection.

"Has the captain seen anything else, partic'lar, to confirm this idee?" he asked.

"Their encampment, careless manner of moving, and unguarded exposure of their persons, are all against their being Indians."

"The messenger they sent across the meadow yesterday seemed to me to be a Mohawk."

"He was. Of his being a real red-skin there can be no question. But he could neither speak nor understand English. The little that passed between us was in Low Dutch. Our dialogue was short; for apprehensive of treachery, I brought it to a close sooner than I might otherwise have done."

"Yes; treachery is a cruel thing," observed the conscientious Joel; "a man can't be too strongly on his guard agin it. Does the captain raally calcilate on defending the house, should a serious attempt be brought forward for the day?"

"Do I! That is an extraordinary question, Mr. Strides. Why have I built in this mode if I have no such intention? — why palisaded? — why armed and garrisoned, if not in earnest?"

"I s'posed all this might have been done to prevent a surprise, but not in any hope of standin' a siege. I should be sorry to see all our women and children shut up

under one roof, if the inimy came agin us, in airnest, with fire and sword."

"And I should be sorry to see them anywhere else. But this is losing time. My object in sending for you, Joel, was to learn your opinion about the true character of our visitors. Have you any opinion or information to give me on that point?"

Joel placed his elbow on his knee and his chin in the palm of his hand, and pondered on what had been suggested, with seeming good-will and great earnestness.

"If any one could be found venturesome enough to go out with a flag," he at length remarked, "the whole truth might be come at in a few minutes."

"And whom shall I employ? Cheerfully would I go myself, were such a step military, or at all excusable in one in my situation."

"If the likes of myself will sarve yer honor's turn," put in Mike, promptly, and yet with sufficient diffidence as regarded his views of his own qualifications, "there'll be nobody to gainsay that same; and it isn't wilcome that I nade tell you ye'll be, to use me as ye would yer own property."

"I hardly think Mike would answer," observed Joel, not altogether without a sneer. "He scurce knows an Iudian from a white man; when it comes to the paint, it would throw him into dreadful confusion."

"If ye thinks that I am to be made to believe in any more Ould Nicks, Misther Sthrides, then ye're making a mistake in my nature. Let but the captain say the word, and I'll go to the mill and bring in a grist of them same, or I'ave my own body for toll."

"I do not doubt you in the least, Mike," Captain Willoughby mildly observed; "but there will be no occasion, just now, of your running any such risks. I shall be able to find other truce-bearers."

"It seems the captain has his man in view," Joel said, keenly eying his master. "Perhaps 'tis the same I saw out with him last night. That's a reliable person, I do s'pose."

"You have hit the nail on the head. It was the man who was out last night, at the same time I was out myself, and his name is Joel Strides."

"The captain's a little musical, this morning. Waal, if go I must, as there was two on us out, let us go to these savages together. I saw enough of that man, to know he is reliable, and if he'll go, I'll go."

"Agreed," said Robert Willoughby, stepping into the library, "I take you at your word, Mr. Strides. You and I will run what risks there may be, in order to relieve this family from its present alarming state."

The captain was astounded, though he knew not whether to be displeased or to rejoice. As for Mike, his countenance expressed great dissatisfaction; for he ever fancied things were going wrong so long as Joel obtained his wishes. Strides, himself, threw a keen glance at the stranger, recognized him at once, and had sufficient self-command to conceal his discovery, though taken completely by surprise. The presence of the major, however, immediately removed all his objections to the proposed expedition; since, should the party prove friendly to the Americans, he would be safe on his own account; or, should it prove the reverse, a king's officer could not fail to be a sufficient protection.

"The gentleman's a total stranger to me," Joel hypocritically resumed; "but as the captain has belief in him, I must have the same. I am ready to do the ar'nd, therefore, as soon as it is agreeable."

"This is well, Captain Willoughby," put in the major, in order to anticipate any objections from his father; "and the sooner a thing of this sort is done, the better will it be for all concerned. I am ready to proceed this instant, and I take it this worthy man — I think you call him Strides — is quite as willing."

Joel signified his assent, and the captain, perceiving no means of retreat, was fain to yield. He took the major into the bedroom, however, and held a minute's private discourse, when he returned, and bade the two go forth together.

"Your companion has his instructions, Joel," the captain observed, as they left the library together, "and you will follow his advice. Show the white flag as soon as you quit the gate. If they are true warriors, it must be respected."

Robert Willoughby was too intent on business, and too fearful of the reappearance and reproachful looks of Maud, to delay. He had passed the court, and was at the outer gate, before any of the garrison even noted his appearance among them. Here, indeed, the father's heart felt a pang; and, but for his military pride, the captain would gladly have recalled his consent. It was too late, however; and, squeezing his hand, he suffered his son to pass outward. Joel followed steadily, as to appearance, though not without misgivings as to what might be the consequences to himself and his growing family.

CHAPTER XVII.

I worship not the sun at noon,
The wandering stars, the changing moon,
The wind, the flood, the flame;
I will not bow the votive knee
To wisdom, virtue, liberty;
There is no god but God, for me,
Jehovah is his name.

MONTGOMERY.

So sudden and unexpected had been the passage of Robert Willoughby through the court, and among the men on post without the inner gates, that no one recognized his person. A few saw that a stranger was in their midst; but, under his disguise, no one was quick enough of eye and thought to ascertain who that stranger was. The little white flag that they displayed, denoted the errand of the messengers; the rest was left to conjecture.

As soon as Captain Willoughby ascertained that the alarm of the morning was not likely to lead to any immediate results, he had dismissed all the men with the exception of a small guard that was stationed near the outer gate, under the immediate orders of Sergeant Joyce. The latter was one of those soldiers who view the details of the profession as forming its great essentials; and when he saw his commander about to direct a *sortie*, it formed his pride not to ask questions, and to seem to know nothing about it. To this, Jamie Allen, who composed one of the guard, quietly assented; but it was a great privation to the three or four New England men to be commanded not to inquire into the why and wherefore.

"Wait for orders, men — wait for orders," observed the sergeant, by way of quieting an impatience that was very apparent. "If his honor the captain wished us to be

acquainted with his movements, he would direct a general parade, and lay the matter before us, as you know he always does, on proper occasions. 'Tis a flag going out, as you can see, and should a truce follow, we'll lay aside our muskets, and seize the ploughshares; should it be a capitulation — I know our brave old commander too well to suppose it possible — but should it be even that, we'll ground arms like men, and make the best of it."

"And should Joel, and the other man, who is a stranger to me, be scalped?" demanded one of the party.

"Then we'll avenge their scalps. That was the way with us when my Lord Howe fell. 'Avenge his death!' cried our colonel, and on we pushed, until near two thousand of us fell before the Frenchmen's trenches. Oh! that was a sight worth seeing, and a day to talk of!"

"Yes, but you were threshed soundly, sergeant, as I've heard from many that were there."

"What of that, sir! we obeyed orders. 'Avenge his death!' was the cry; and on we pushed, in obedience, until there were not men enough left in our battalion to carry the wounded to the rear."

"And what did you do with them?" asked a youth, who regarded the sergeant as another Cæsar — Napoleon not having come into notice in 1776.

"We let them lie where they fell. Young man, war teaches us all the wholesome lesson that impossibilities are impossible to be done. War is the great schoolmaster of the human race, and a learned man is he who has made nineteen or twenty campaigns."

"If he live to turn his lessons to account," remarked the first speaker, with a sneer.

"If a man is to die in battle, sir, he had better die with his mind stored with knowledge, than be shot like a dog that has outlived his usefulness. Every pitched battle carries out of the world learning upon learning that has been got in the field. Here comes his honor, who will confirm all I tell you, men. I was letting these men, sir, understand that the army and the field are the best schools on earth. Every old soldier will stick to that, your honor."

"We are apt to think so, Joyce. Have the arms been inspected this morning?"

"As soon as it was light, I did that myself, sir."

"Flints, cartridge-boxes, and bayonets, I hope?"

"Each and all, sir. Does your honor remember the morning we had the affair near Fort du Quesne?"

"You mean Braddock's defeat, I suppose, Joyce?"

"I call nothing a defeat, Captain Willoughby. We were roughly handled that day, sir; but I am not satisfied it was a defeat. It is true, we fell back, and lost some arms and stores; but, in the main, we stuck to our colors, considering it was in the woods. No, sir; I do not call that a defeat, by any means."

"You will at least own we were hard pressed, and might have fared worse than we did, had it not been for a certain colonial corps that manfully withstood the savages?"

"Yes, sir; that I allow. I remember the corps, and its commander, a Colonel Washington, with your honor's permission."

"It was, indeed, Joyce. And do you happen to know what has become of this same Colonel Washington?"

"It never crossed my mind to inquire, sir, as he was a provincial. I dare say he may have a regiment — or even a brigade by this time; and good use would he make of either."

"You have fallen far behind his fortunes, Joyce. The man is a commander-in-chief — a captain-general."

"Your honor is jesting — since many of his seniors are still living."

"This is the man who leads the American armies, in the war with England."

"Well, sir, in that way, he may indeed get a quick step or two. I make no doubt, sir, so good a soldier will know how to obey orders."

"From which I infer you think him right, in the cause he has espoused?"

"Bless your honor, sir, I think nothing about it, and care nothing about it. If the gentleman has taken service with Congress, as they call the new headquarters, why he ought

to obey Congress; and if he serve the king, his Majesty's orders should be attended to."

"And, in this crisis, sergeant, may I ask in what particular service you conceive yourself to be, just at the present moment?"

"Captain Willoughby's, late of his Majesty's ——th Regiment of Foot, at your honor's command."

"If all act in the same spirit, Joyce, we shall do well enough at the Knoll, though twice as many savages brave us as are to be seen on yon rocks," returned the captain, smiling.

"And why should they no?" demanded Jamie Allen, earnestly. "Ye're laird here, and we've no the time nor the grace to study and understand the orthodoxy and heterodoxy of the quarrel atween the House of Hanover and the houses of these Americans; so, while we a' stand up for the house and household of our old master, the Lord will smile on our efforts, and lead us to victory."

"Divil bur-r-n me, now, Jamie," said Mike, who, having seen the major to the gate, now followed his father, in readiness to do him any good turn that might offer — "divil bur-r-n me, now, Jamie, if ye could have said it better had ye just aised yer conscience to a proper praist, and were talking on a clain breast! Stick up for the captain, says I, and the Lord will be of our side!"

The sergeant nodded approbation of this sentiment, and the younger Pliny, who happened also to be within hearing, uttered the sententious word "Gosh!" and clenched his fist, which was taken as proof of assent also, on his part. But the Americans of the guard, all of whom were the tools of Joel's and the miller's arts, manifested a coldness that even exceeded the usual cold manner of their class. These men meant right; but they had been deluded by the falsehoods, machinations, and frauds of a demagogue, and were no longer masters of their own opinions or acts. It struck the captain that something was wrong; but, a foreigner by birth himself, he had early observed, and long known, the peculiar exterior and phlegm of the people of the country, which so nearly resemble the stoicism of the aborigines, as

to induce many writers to attribute both alike to a cause connected with climate. The present was not a moment, however, nor was the impression strong enough to induce the master of the place to enter into any inquiries. Turning his eyes in the direction of the two bearers of the flag, he there beheld matter for new interest, completely diverting his thoughts from what had just passed.

"I see they have sent two men to meet our messengers, sergeant," he said; "this looks as if they understood the laws of war."

"Quite true, your honor. They should now blindfold our party, and lead them within their own works, before they suffer them to see at all; though there would be no great advantage in it, as Strides is as well acquainted with every inch of that rock as I am with the manual exercise."

"Which would seem to supersede the necessity of the ceremony you have mentioned."

"One never knows, your honor. Blindfolding is according to the rules, and I should blindfold a flag before I let him approach, though the hostile ranks stood drawn up one on each side of the parade ground. Much is gained, while nothing is ever lost, by sticking to the rules of a trade."

The captain smiled, as did all the Americans of the guard; the last having too much sagacity not to perceive that a thing might be overdone, as well as too little attended to. As for Jamie and Mike, they both received the sergeant's opinions as law; the one from having tried the troops of the line at Culloden, and the other on account of divers experiences through which he had gone, and sundry fairs, in his own green island. By this time, however, all were too curious in watching the result of the meeting, to continue the discourse.

Robert Willoughby and Joel had moved along the lane, towards the rocks, without hesitating, keeping their little flag flying. It did not appear that their approach produced any change among the savages, who were now preparing their breakfasts, until they had got within two hundred yards of the encampment, when two of the red-men, having first laid aside their arms, advanced to meet their visitors.

This was the interview which attracted the attention of those at the Hut, and its progress was noted with the deepest interest.

The meeting appeared to be friendly. After a short conference, in which signs seemed to be a material agent in the communications, the four moved on in company, walking deliberately towards the rocks. Captain Willoughby had sent for his field-glass, and could easily perceive much that occurred in the camp, on the arrival of his son. The major's movements were calm and steady, and a feeling of pride passed over the father's heart, as he noted this, amid a scene that was well adapted to disturb the equilibrium of the firmest mind. Joel certainly betrayed nervousness, though he kept close at his companion's side, and together they proceeded into the very centre of the party of strangers.

The captain observed, also, that this arrival caused no visible sensation among the red-men. Even those the major almost touched in passing did not look up to note his appearance, while no one seemed to speak, or in any manner to heed him. The cooking and other preparations for the breakfast proceeded precisely as if no one had entered the camp. The two who had gone forth to meet the flag alone attended its bearers, whom they led through the centre of the entire party; stopping only on the side opposite to the Hut, where there was an open space of flat rock, which it had not suited the savages to occupy.

Here the four halted, the major turning and looking back like a soldier who was examining his ground. Nor did any one appear disposed to interrupt him in an employment that Sergeant Joyce pronounced to be both bold and against the usages of war to permit. The captain thought the stoicism of the savages amounted to exaggeration, and it renewed his distrust of the real characters of his visitors. In a minute or two, however, some three or four of the red-men were seen consulting together apart, after which they approached the bearers of the flag, and some communications passed between the two sides. The nature of these communications could not be known, of course, though the

conference appeared to be amicable. After two or three minutes of conversation, Robert Willoughby, Strides, the two men who had advanced to meet them, and the four chiefs who had joined the group, left the summit of the rock in company, taking a foot-path that descended in the direction of the mills. In a short time they all disappeared in a body.

The distance was not so great but these movements could easily be seen by the naked eye, though the glass was necessary to discover some of the details. Captain Willoughby had planted the instrument among the palisades, and he kept his gaze riveted on the retiring group as long as it was visible; then, indeed, he looked at his companions, as if to read their opinions in their countenances. Joyce understood the expression of his face; and, saluting in the usual military manner, he presumed to speak, in the way of reply.

"It seems all right, your honor, the bandage excepted," said the sergeant. "The flag has been met at the outposts, and led into the camp. There the officer of the day, or some savage who does the duty, has heard his errand; and, no doubt, they have all now gone to headquarters, to report."

"I desired my son, Joyce" —

"Whom, your honor?"

The general movement told the captain how completely his auditors were taken by surprise, at this unlooked-for announcement of the presence of the major at the Knoll. It was too late to recall the words, however, and there was so little prospect of Robert's escaping the penetration of Joel, the father saw no use in attempting further concealment.

"I say I desired my son, Major Willougby, who is the bearer of that flag," the captain steadily resumed, "to raise his hat in a particular manner, if all seemed right; or to make a certain gesture with his left arm, did he see anything that required us to be more than usually on our guard."

"And which notice has he given to the garrison, if it be your honor's pleasure to let us know?"

"Neither. I thought he manifested an intention to make the signal with the hat, when the chiefs first joined him; but he hesitated, and lowered his hand without doing as I had expected. Then again, just as he disappeared behind the rocks, the left arm was in motion, though not in a way to complete the signal."

"Did he seem hurried, your honor, as if prevented from communicating by the enemy?"

"Not at all, Joyce. Irresolution appeared to be at the bottom of it, so far as I could judge."

"Pardon me, your honor; uncertainty would be a better word, as applied to so good a soldier. Has Major Willoughby quitted the king's service, that he is among us, sir, just at this moment?"

"I will tell you his errand another time, sergeant. At present, I can think only of the risk he runs. These Indians are lawless wretches; one is never sure of their faith."

"They are bad enough, sir; but no man can well be so bad as to disregard the rights of a flag," answered the sergeant, in a grave and slightly important manner. "Even the French, your honor, have always respected our flags."

"That is true; and yet I wish we could overlook that position at the mill. It's a great advantage to them, Joyce, that they can place themselves behind such a cover when they choose!"

The sergeant looked at the encampment a moment; then his eye followed the woods, and the mountain-sides, that skirted the little plain, until his back was fairly turned upon the supposed enemy, and he faced the forest in the rear of the Hut.

"If it be agreeable to your honor, a detachment can be detailed to make a demonstration" — Joyce did not exactly understand this word, but it sounded military — "in the following manner: I can lead out the party by the rear of the house, using the brook as a covered way. Once in the woods, it will be easy enough to make a flank movement upon the enemy's position; after which, the detachment can be guided by circumstances."

This was very martial in sound, and the captain felt well assured that Joyce was the man to attempt carrying out his own plan; but he made no answer, sighing and shaking his head, as he walked away towards the house. The chaplain followed, leaving the rest to observe the savages.

"Yeer proposition, sergeant, no seems to give his honor much satisfaction," said the mason, as soon as his superior was out of hearing. "Still, it was military, as I know by what I saw mysal' in the Forty-five. Flainking, and surprising, and obsairving, and demonstrating, and such devices, are the soul of war, and are a' on the great highway to victory. Had Chairlie's men obsairved, and particularized mair, there might have been a different family on the throne, an' the prince wad ha' got his ain ag'in. I like your idea much, sergeant, and gin' ye gang oot to practice it, I trust ye'll no forget that ye've an auld fri'nd here, willing to be of the pairty."

"I didn't think the captain much relished the notion of being questioned about his son's feelin's, and visit up here, at a time like this," put in one of the Americans.

"There's bowels in the man's body!" cried Mike, "and it isn't the likes of him that has no failin'. Ye don't know what it is to be a father, or ye'd groan in spirit to see a child of yer own in the grip of fiery divils like them same. Isn't he a pratty man, and wouldn't I be sorrowful to hear that he had come to har-r-m? Ye've niver asked, sergeant, how the majjor got into the house, and ye a military sentry in the bargain!"

"I suppose he came by command, Michael, and it is not the duty of the non-commissioned officers to question their superiors about anything that has happened out of the common way. I take things as I find them, and obey orders. I only hope that the son, as a field-officer, will not out-rank the father, which would be unbecoming; though date of commissions, and superiority, must be respected."

"I rather think if a major in the king's service was to undertake to use authority here," said the spokesman of

the Americans, a little stiffly, "he would not find many disposed to follow at his heels."

"Mutiny would not fare well, did it dare to lift its head in this garrison," answered the sergeant, with a dignity that might better have suited the mess-room of a regular regiment, than the situation in which he was actually placed. "Both Captain Willoughby and myself have seen mutiny attempted, but neither has ever seen it succeed."

"Do you look on us as lawful enlisted soldiers?" demanded one of the laborers, who had a sufficient smattering of the law to understand the difference between a mercenary and a volunteer. "If I'm regimented, I should at least like to know in whose service it is?"

"Ye're over-quick at yer objections and sentiments," said Jamie Allen, coolly, "like most youths, who see only their ain experience in the airth, and the providence o' the Lord. Enlisted we are, a' of us, even to Michael here, and it's in the service of our good master, his honor Captain Willoughby, whom, with his kith and kin, may the Lord presairve from this and all other dangers."

The word master would, of itself, be very likely to create a revolt to-day, in such a corps as it was the fortune of our captain to command, though to that of "boss" there would not be raised the slightest objection. But the English language had not undergone half of its present mutations in the year 1776; and no one winced in admitting that he served a "master," though the gorges of several rose at the idea of being engaged in the service of any one, considered in a military point of view. It is likely the suggestion of the mason would have led to a hot discussion, had not a stir among the savages, just at that instant, called off the attention of all present, to matters of more importance than even an angry argument.

The movement seemed to be general, and Joyce ordered his men to stand to their arms. Still he hesitated about giving the alarm. Instead of advancing towards the Hut, however, the Indians raised a general yell, and went over the cliffs, disappearing in the direction of the

mill, like a flock of birds taking wing together. After waiting half an hour in vain, to ascertain if any signs of the return of the Indians were to be seen, the sergeant went himself to report the state of things to his commander.

Captain Willoughby had withdrawn to make his toilet for the day, when he saw the last of his son and the overseer. While thus employed, he had communicated to his wife all that had occurred, and Mrs. Willoughby, in her turn, had told the same to her daughters. Maud was much the most distressed, her suspicions of Joel being by far the most active and the most serious. From the instant she learned what had passed, she began to anticipate grave consequences to Robert Willoughby, though she had sufficient fortitude, and sufficient consideration for others, to keep most of her apprehensions to herself.

When Joyce demanded his audience, the family was at breakfast, though little was eaten, and less was said. The sergeant was admitted, and he told his story with military precision.

"This has a suspicious air, Joyce," observed the captain, after musing a little; "to me it seems like an attempt to induce us to follow, and to draw us into an ambuscade."

"It may be that, your honor; or it may be a good honest retreat. Two prisoners is a considerable exploit for savages to achieve. I have known them count one a victory."

"Be not uneasy, Wilhelmina; Bob's rank will secure him good treatment, his exchange being far more important to his captors, if captors they be, than his death. It is too soon to decide on such a point, sergeant. After all, the Indians may be at the mills, in council. On a war-path, all the young men are usually consulted before any important step is taken. Then, it may be the wish of the chiefs to impress our flag-bearers with an idea of their force."

"All that is military, your honor, and quite possible. Still, to me the movement seems as if a retreat was intended, in fact, or that the appearance of one was in view."

"I will soon know the truth," cried the chaplain. "I a man of peace, can surely go forth, and ascertain who these people are, and what is their object."

"You, Woods! My dear fellow, do you imagine a tribe of bloodthirsty savages will respect you, or your sacred office? You have a sufficient task with the king's forces letting his enemies alone. You are no missionary to still a war-cry."

"I beg pardon, sir," put in the sergeant, "his reverence is more than half right." Here the chaplain rose and quitted the room in haste, unobserved by the two colloquists "There is scarce a tribe in the colony, your honor, that has not some knowledge of our priesthood; and I know of no instance in which the savages have ever ill-treated a divine."

"Pooh, pooh, Joyce; this is much too sentimental for your Mohawks, and Oneidas, and Onondagas, and Tuscaroras. They will care no more for little Woods than they care for the great woods through which they journey on their infernal errands."

"One cannot know, Hugh," observed the anxious mother; "our dear Robert is in their hands; and should Mr. Woods be really disposed to go on this mission of mercy, does it comport with our duty as parents to oppose it?"

"A mother is all mother," murmured the captain, who rose from table, kissed his wife's cheek affectionately, and left the room, beckoning to the sergeant to follow.

Captain Willoughby had not been gone many minutes when the chaplain made his appearance, attired in his surplice, and wearing his best wig; an appliance that all elderly gentlemen in that day fancied necessary to the dignity and gravity of their appearance. Mrs. Willoughby, to own the truth, was delighted. If this excellent woman was ever unjust, it was in behalf of her children; solicitude for whom sometimes induced her to overlook the rigid construction of the laws of equality.

"We will see which best understands the influence of the sacred office, Captain Willoughby or myself," observed

the chaplain, with a little more importance of manner than it was usual for one so simple to assume. "I do not believe the ministry was instituted to be browbeaten by tribes of savages, any more than it is to be silenced by the unbeliever or schismatic."

It was very evident that the Rev. Mr. Woods was considerably excited; and this was a condition of mind so unusual with him, as to create a species of awe in the observers. As for the two young women, deeply as they were interested in the result, and keenly as Maud, in particular, felt everything which touched the fortunes of Robert Willoughby, neither would presume to interfere, when they saw one whom they had been taught to reverence from childhood, acting in a way that so little conformed to his ordinary manner. As for Mrs. Willoughby, her own feelings were so much awakened, that never had Mr. Woods seemed so evangelical and like a saint, as at that very moment; and it would not have been difficult to persuade her that he was acting under something very like righteous superhuman impulses.

Such, however, was far from being the case. The worthy priest had an exalted idea of his office, and to fancy it might favorably impress even savages, was little more than carrying out his every-day notions of its authority. He conscientiously believed that he himself, a regularly ordained presbyter, would be more likely to succeed in the undertaking before him, than a mere deacon; were a bishop present, he would cheerfully have submitted to his superior claims to sanctity and success. As for archbishops, archdeacons, deans, rural deans, and all the other worldly machinery which has been superadded to the Church, the truth compels us to add, that our divine felt no especial reverence, since he considered them as so much clerical surplusage, of very questionable authority, and of doubtful use. He adhered strictly to the orders of divine institution; to these he attached so much weight, as to be entirely willing, in his own person, to demonstrate how little was to be apprehended, when their power was put forth, even against Indians, in humility and faith.

"I shall take this sprig of laurel in my hand, in lieu of the olive-branch," said the excited chaplain, "as the symbol of peace. It is not probable that savages can tell one plant from the other; and if they could, it will be easy to explain that olives do not grow in America. It is an eastern tree, ladies, and furnishes the pleasant oil we use on our salads. I carry with me, notwithstanding, the oil which proves a balm to many sorrows; that will be sufficient."

"You will bid them let Robert return to us without de-lay?" said Mrs. Willoughby, earnestly.

"I shall bid them respect God and their consciences. I cannot now stop to rehearse to you the mode of proceeding I shall adopt; but it is all arranged in my own mind. It will be necessary to call the Deity the 'Great Spirit,' or 'Manitou' — and to use many poetical images; but this can I do, on an emergency. Extempore preaching is far from agreeable to me, in general; nor do I look upon it, in this age of the world, as exactly canonical; nevertheless, it shall be seen I know how to submit even to that, when there is a suitable necessity."

It was so seldom Mr. Woods used such magnificent ideas, or assumed a manner in the least distinguishable from one of the utmost simplicity, that his listeners now felt really awed; and when he turned to bless them, as he did with solemnity and affection, the two daughters knelt to receive his benedictions. These delivered, he walked out of the room, crossed the court, and proceeded straightway to the outer gate.

It was, perhaps, fortunate to the design of the Rev. Mr. Woods, that neither the captain nor the sergeant was in the way to arrest it. This, the former would certainly have done out of regard to his friend, and the last out of regard to "orders." But these military personages were in the library, in deep consultation concerning the next step necessary to take. This left the coast clear, no one belonging to the guard conceiving himself of sufficient authority to stop the chaplain, more especially when he appeared in his wig and surplice. Jamie Allen was a corporal, by courtesy and, at the first summons, he caused the outer gate to be

unlocked and unbarred, permitting the chaplain to make his egress, attended by his own respectful bows. This Jamie did out of reverence to religion generally, though the surplice ever excited his disgust; and, as for the Liturgy, he deemed it to be a species of solemn mockery of worship.

The captain did not reappear outside of the court until the chaplain, who had made the best of his way towards the rocks, was actually stalking, like a ghost among ruins, through the deserted shanties of the late encampment.

"What in the name of Indian artifice is the white animal that I see moving about on the rocks?" demanded the captain, whose look was first turned in the direction of the camp.

"It seems an Indian wrapped up in a shirt, your honor; as I live, sir, it has a cocked hat on its head!"

"Na, na," interrupted Jamie, "ye'll no be guessing the truth this time, without the aid of a little profane revelation. The chiel ye see yan, yer honor, is just chaplain Woods."

"Woods — the devil!"

"Na, na, yer honor, its the reverend gentleman hissel', and no the de'il at a'. He's in his white frock — though why he didn't wear his black gairment is more than I can tell ye; but there he is, walking about amang the Indian dwellings, all the same as if they were so many pews in his ain kirk."

"And how came you to let him pass the gate against orders?"

"Well, and it is aboot the orders of the priesthood, that he so often preaches, and seeing him in the white gairment, and knowing ye've so many fast-days, and Christmas', in the kirk o' England, I fancied it might be a bit matter o' prayer he wished to offer up, yan, in the house on the flat; and so I e'en thought church prayers better than no prayers at all, in such a strait."

As it was useless to complain, the captain was fain to submit, even beginning to hope some good might come of the adventure, when he saw Mr. Woods walking unmolested through the deserted camp. The glass was leveled, and the result was watched in intense interest.

The chaplain first explored every shanty, fearlessly ar with diligence. Then he descended the rocks, and was lo to view, like those who had preceded him. A feverish hou passed, without any symptom of human life appearing in th direction of the mills. Sometimes those who watche fancied they beheld a smoke beginning to steal up over th brow of the rocks, the precursor of the expected conflagr tion; but a few moments dispersed the apprehension ar the fancied smoke together. The day advanced, and y the genius of solitude reigned over the mysterious gle Not a sound emerged from it, not a human form was see near it, not a sign of a hostile assault or of a friendly retur could be detected. All in that direction lay buried i silence, as if the ravine had swallowed its tenants, in imita tion of the grave.

CHAPTER XVIII.

To deck my list by Nature were designed
Such shining expletives of human kind ;
Who want, while through blank life they dream along,
Sense to be right, and passion to be wrong.

YOUNG.

THE disappearance of Mr. Woods occasioned no uneasiness at first. An hour elapsed before the captain thought it necessary to relate the occurrence to his family, when a general panic prevailed among the females. Even Maud had hoped the savages would respect the sacred character of the divine, though she knew not why ; and here was one of her principal grounds of hope, as connected with Robert Willoughby, slid from beneath her feet.

" What can we do, Willoughby ? " asked the affectionate mother, almost reduced to despair. " I will go myself in search of my son ; they will respect me, a woman and a mother."

" You little know the enemy we have to deal with, Wilhelmina, or so rash a thought could not have crossed your mind. We will not be precipitate ; a few hours may bring some change to direct us. One thing I learn from Woods's delay. The Indians cannot be far off, and he must be with them, or in their hands ; else would he return after having visited the mills and the houses beneath the cliffs."

This sounded probable, and all felt there was a relief in fancying that their friends were still near them, and were not traversing the wilderness as captives.

" I feel less apprehension than any of you," observed Beulah, in her placid manner. " If Bob is in the hands of an American party, the brother-in-law of Evert Beekman cannot come to much harm ; with British Indians he will be respected for his own sake, as soon as he can make himself known."

"I have thought of all this, my child," answered the father, musing, "and there is reason in it. It will be difficult, however, for Bob to make his real character certain in his present circumstances. He does not appear the man he is; and should there even be a white among his captors who can read, he has not a paper with him to sustain his word."

"But he promised me faithfully to use Evert's name, did he ever fall into American hands," resumed Beulah, earnestly, "and Evert has said, again and again, that my brother could never be his enemy."

"Heaven help us all, dear child!" answered the captain, kissing his daughter; "it is, indeed, a cruel war, when such aids are to be called in for our protection. We will endeavor to be cheerful, notwithstanding; for we know of nothing yet that ought to alarm us out of reason; all may come right before the sun sets."

The captain looked at his family, and endeavored to smile, but he met no answering gleam of happiness on either face; nor was his own effort very successful. As for his wife, she was never known to be aught but miserable while any she loved were in doubtful safety. She lived entirely out of herself, and altogether for her husband, children, and friends; a woman less selfish, or one more devoted to the affections, never existing. Then Beulah, with all her reliance on the magic of Evert's name, and with the deep feelings that had been awakened within her as a wife and a mother, still loved her brother as tenderly as ever. As for Maud, the agony she endured was increased by her efforts to keep it from breaking out in some paroxysms that might betray her secret; and her features were getting an expression of stern resolution, which, blended with her beauty, gave them a grandeur her father had never before seen in her bright countenance.

"This child suffers on Bob's account more than any of us," observed the captain, drawing his pet towards him, placing her kindly on his knee, and folding her to his bosom. "She has no husband yet to divide her heart; all her love centres in her brother."

The look which Beulah cast upon her father was not reproachful, for that was an expression she would not have indulged with him; but it was one in which pain and mortification were so obvious, as to induce the mother to receive her into her own arms.

"Hugh, you are unjust to Beulah," said the anxious mother; "nothing can ever cause this dear girl, either, to forget to feel for any of us."

The captain's ready explanation, and affectionate kiss, brought a smile again to Beulah's face, though it shone amid tears. All was, however, immediately forgotten; for the parties understood each other, and Maud profited by the scene to escape from the room. This flight broke up the conference; and the captain, after exhorting his wife and daughter to set an example of fortitude to the rest of the females, left the house, to look after his duties among the men.

The absence of Joel cast a shade of doubt over the minds of the disaffected. These last were comparatively numerous, comprising most of the native Americans in the Hut, the blacks and Joyce excepted. Strides had been enabled to effect his purposes more easily with his own countrymen by working on their good qualities, as well as on their bad. Many of these men — most of them, indeed — meant well, but their attachment to the cause of their native land laid them open to assaults, against which Mike and Jamie Allen were insensible. Captain Willoughby was an Englishman, in the first place; he was an old army officer, in the next; and he had an only son, who was confessedly in open arms against the independence of America. It is easy to see how a demagogue like Joel, who had free access to the ears of his comrades, could improve circumstances like these to his own particular objects. Nevertheless, he had difficulties to contend with. If it were true that Parson Woods still insisted on praying for the king, it was known that the captain laughed at him for his reverence for Cæsar; if Robert Willoughby were a major in the royal forces, Evert Beekman was a colonel in the continentals; if the owner of the manor were born in England, his wife and children were

born in America; and he himself was often heard to express his convictions of the justice of most of that for which the provincials were contending — all the worthy captain had not yet made up his mind to concede to them.

Then, most of the Americans in the Hut entertained none of the selfish and narrow views of Joel and the miller. Their wish was to do right, in the main; and though obnoxious to the charge of entertaining certain prejudices that rendered them peculiarly liable to become the dupes of a demagogue, they submitted to many of the better impulses and were indisposed to be guilty of any act of downright injustice. The perfect integrity with which they had ever been treated, too, had its influence; nor was the habitual kindness of Mrs. Willoughby to their wives and children forgotten; nor the gentleness of Beulah, or the beauty, spirit and generous impulses of Maud. In a word, the captain when he went forth to review his men, who were now all assembled under arms within the palisades for that purpose, went to meet a wavering, rather than a positively disaffected or rebellious body.

"Attention!" cried Joyce, as his commanding officer came in front of a line which contained men of different colors, statures, ages, dresses, countries, habits, and physiognomies, making it a sort of epitome of the population of the whole colony, as it existed in that day — "Attention! Present arms!"

The captain pulled off his hat complacently, in return to this salute, though he was obliged to smile at the array which met his eyes. Every one of the Dutchmen had got his musket to an order, following a sort of fugleman of their own; while Mike had invented a "motion" that would have puzzled any one but himself to account for. The butt of the piece was projected towards the captain, quite out of line, while the barrel rested on his own shoulder. Still, as his arms were extended to the utmost, the county Leitrim-man fancied he was performing much better than common. Jamie had correct notions of the perpendicular from having used the plumb-bob so much, though even he made the trifling mistake of presenting arms with the lock

outwards. As for the Yankees, they were all tolerably exact, in everything but time, and the line; bringing their pieces down, one after another, much as they were in the practice of following their leaders, in matters of opinion. The negroes defied description; nor was it surprising they failed, each of them thrusting his head forward to see how the "motions" looked, in a way that prevented any particular attention to his own part of the duty. The sergeant had the good sense to see that his drill had not yet produced perfection, and he brought his men to a shoulder again, as soon as possible. In this he succeeded perfectly, with the exception that just half of the arms were brought to the right, and the other half to the left, shoulders.

"We shall do better, your honor, as we get a little more drill," said Joyce, with an apologetic salute; "Corporal Strides has a tolerable idea of the manual, and he usually acts as our fugleman. When he gets back we shall improve."

"When he gets back, sergeant — can you or any other man tell when that will be?"

"Yes, yer honor," sputtered Mike, with the eagerness of a boy. "I'se the man to tell yees that same."

"You? What can you know, that is not known to all of us, my good Michael?"

"I knows what I sees; and if yon isn't Mister Sthrides, then I am not acquainted with his sthraddle."

Sure enough, Joel appeared at the gate, as Mike concluded his assertions. How he got there no one knew; for a good lookout had been kept in the direction of the mill; and yet here was the overseer applying for admission, as if he had fallen from the clouds! Of course, the application was not denied, though made in a manner so unexpected, and Joel stood in front of his old comrades at the hoe and plough, if not in arms, in less than a minute. His return was proclaimed through the house in an incredibly short space of time, by the aid of the children, and all the females came pouring out from the court to learn the tidings, led by Mrs. Strides and her young brood.

"Have you anything to communicate to me in private,

Strides?" the captain demanded, maintaining an appear ance of *sang-froid* that he was far from feeling, "or ca your report be made here, before the whole settlement?"

"It's just as the captain pleases," answered the wil demagogue; "though, to my notion, the people have right to know all, in an affair that touches the commo interest."

"Attention! men," cried the sergeant; "by platoons, t the right" —

"No matter, Joyce," interrupted the captain, waving hi hand, "let the men remain. You have held communica tions with our visitors, I know, Strides?"

"We have, Captain Willoughby, and a desperate sort o visitors be they! A more ugly set of Mohawks and Onon dagas I never laid eyes on."

"As for their appearance, it is a matter of indifference t me; what is the object of their visit?"

"I mean ugly behaved, and they deserve all I say o 'em. Their ar'nd, according to their own tell, is to seiz the captain and his family in behalf of the colonies."

As Joel uttered this, he cast a glance along the line o faces paraded before him, in order to read the effect i might produce. That it was not lost on some, was as ev dent as that it was on others. The captain, howeve appeared unmoved, and there was a slight air of incredulit in the smile that curled his lip.

"This, then, you report as being the business of th party in coming to this place!" he said, quietly.

"I do, sir; and an ugly ar'nd it is, in times like these."

"Is there any person in authority in a party that pre tends to move about the colony with such high duties?"

"There's one or two white men among 'em, if that what the captain means; they pretend to be duly authorize and app'inted to act on behalf of the people."

At each allusion to the people, Joel invariably looke towards his particular partisans, in order to note the effec the use of the word might produce. On the present occa sion, he even ventured to wink at the miller.

"If acting on authority, why do they keep aloof?

have no such character for resisting the laws, that any who come clothed with its mantle need fear resistance."

"Why, I s'pose they reason in some such manner as this. There's two laws in operation at this time; the king's law, and the people's law. I take it, this party comes in virtue of the people's law, whereas it is likely the law the captain means is the king's law. The difference is so great, that one or t'other carries the day, just as the king's friends or the people's friends happen to be the strongest. These men don't like to trust to their law, when the captain may think it safest to trust a little to his'n."

"And all this was told you, Strides, in order to be repeated to me?"

"Not a word on't; it's all my own consait about the matter. Little passed between us."

"And now," said the captain, relieving his breast by a long sigh, "I presume I may inquire about your companion. You probably have ascertained who he is?"

"Lord, Captain Willoughby, I was altogether dumfounded, when the truth came upon me of a sudden! I never should have known the major in that dress in the world, or out of the world either; but he walks so like the captain, that as I followed a'ter him, I said to myself, who can it be? — and then the walk came over me, as it might be; and then I remembered last night, and the stranger that was out with the captain, and how he occupied the room next to the library, and them things; and so, when I come to look in his face, there was the major, sure enough!"

Joel lied famously in this account; but he believed himself safe, as no one could very well contradict him.

"Now you have explained the manner in which you recognized my son, Strides," added the captain, "I will thank you to let me know what has become of him?"

"He's with the savages. Having come so far to seize the father, it wasn't in natur' to let the son go free, when he walked right into the lion's den, like."

"And how could the savages know he was my son? Did they, too, recognize the family walk?"

Strides was taken aback at this question, and he even had the grace to color a little. He saw that he was critically placed; for in addition to the suggestions of conscience, he understood the captain sufficiently to know he was a man who would not trifle, in the event of his suspicions becoming active. He knew he deserved the gallows, and Joyce was a man who would execute him in an instant did his commander order it. The idea fairly made the traitor tremble in his shoes.

"Ah! I've got a little ahead of my story," he said hastily. "But perhaps I had best tell everything as it happened" —

"That will be the simplest and clearest course. In order that there be no interruption we will go into my room where Joyce will follow as soon as he has dismissed his men."

This was done, and in a minute or two the captain and Joel were seated in the library, Joyce respectfully standing, the old soldier always declining to assume any familiarity with his superior. We shall give the substance of most of Joel's report in our own language; preferring it, defective as it is, to that of the overseer, which was no bad representative of his cunning, treacherous, and low mind.

It seems, then, that the bearers of the flag were amicably received by the Indians. The men towards whom they were led on the rocks, were the chiefs of the party, who treated them with proper respect. The sudden movement was explained to them, as connected with their meal; and the chiefs, accompanied by the major and Strides, proceeded to the house of the miller. Here, by means of a white man for an interpreter, the major had demanded the motive of the strangers in coming into the settlement. The answer was a frank demand for the surrender of the Hut and all it contained, to the authorities of the continental Congress. The major had endeavored to persuade a white man, who professed to hold the legal authority for what was doing, of the perfectly neutral disposition of his father, when, according to Joel's account, to his own great astonishment the argument was met by the announcement of Robert

Willoughby's true character, and a sneering demand if it were likely a man who had a son in the royal army, and who had kept that son secreted in his own house, would be very indifferent to the success of the royal cause.

"They've got a wonderful smart man there for a magistrate, I can tell you," added Joel, with emphasis, "and he raally bore as hard on the major as a lawyer before a court. How he found out that the major was at the Hut is a little strange, seein' that none of us know'd of it; but they've got extraor'nary means, nowadays."

"And did Major Willoughby admit his true character, when charged with being in the king's service?"

"He did — and like a gentleman. He only insisted that his sole ar'nd out here was to see his folks, and that he intended to go back to York the moment he had paid his visit."

"How did the person you mention receive his explanations?"

"Waal, to own the truth, he laughed at it like all natur'. I don't believe they put any great weight on a syllable the major told 'em. I never see critturs with such onbelievin' faces! After talking as long as suited themselves, they ordered the major to be shut up in a buttery, with a warrior at the door for a sentinel; a'ter which they took to examining me."

Joel then proceeded with an account — his own account, always be it remembered — of what passed between himself and the strangers. They had questioned him closely touching the nature of the defenses of the Hut, the strength of the garrison, its disposition, the number and quality of the arms, and the amount of the ammunition.

"You may depend on't, I gave a good account," continued the overseer, in a self-satisfied way. "In the first place, I told 'em, the captain had a lieutenant with him that had sarved out the whull French war; then I put the men up to fifty at once, seein' it was just as easy to say that, as thirty or thirty-three. As to the arms, I told 'em more than half the pieces were double-barreled; and

that the captain, in particular, carried a rifle that had killed nine savages in one fight."

"You were much mistaken in that, Joel. It is true, that a celebrated chief once fell by this rifle; even that is not a matter for boasting."

"Waal, them that told me on't, said that two had fallen before it, and I put it up to nine at once, to make a good story better. Nine men had a more desperate sound than two; and when you do begin to brag, a man shouldn't be backward. I thought, however, that they was most nonplussed when I told 'em of the field-piece."

"The field-piece, Strides! Why did you venture on an exaggeration that any forward movement of theirs must expose?"

"We'll see to that, captain — we'll see to that. Field-pieces are desperate dampers to Indian courage, so I thought I'd just let 'em have a six-pounder, by way of tryin' their natur's. They looked like men goin' to execution, when I told 'em of the cannon, and what a history it had gone through."

"And what may have been this history, pray?"

"I just told 'em it was the very gun the captain had took from the French, about which we've all heern tell; and that, as everybody knows, was a desperate piece, havin' killed more than a hundred reg'lars, before the captain charged baggonet on it and carried it off."

This was a very artful speech, since it alluded to the most distinguished exploit of Captain Willoughby's military life; one of which it would have been more than human, had he not been a little proud. All who knew him had heard of this adventure, and Joel cunningly turned it to account in the manner seen. The allusion served to put to sleep, for the moment at least, certain very unpleasant suspicions that were getting to be active in his superior's mind.

"There was no necessity, Strides, for saying anything about that affair," the captain modestly interposed. "It happened a long time since, and might well be forgotten. Then you know we have no gun to support your account,

when our deficiency is ascertained, it will all be set down to the true cause — a wish to conceal our real weakness."

"I beg your honor's pardon," put in Joyce, "I think Strides has acted in a military manner in this affair. It is according to the art of war for the besieged to pretend to be stronger than they are; and even besiegers sometimes put a better face than the truth will warrant on their strength. Military accounts, as your honor well knows, never pass exactly for gospel, unless it be with the raw hands."

"Then," added Joel, "I know'd what I was about, seein' that we had a cannon ready for use, as soon as it could be mounted."

"I think I understand Strides, your honor," resumed the the sergeant. "I have carved a 'quaker,' as an ornament for the gateway, intending to saw it in two in the middle, and place the pieces crosswise over the entrance, as your honor has often seen such things in garrison — like the brass ornaments on the artillery caps, I mean, your honor. Well, this gun is finished and painted, and I intended to split it, and have it up this very week. I suppose Joel has had it in his mind, quaker fashion."

"The sergeant's right. That piece looks as much like a real cannon as one of our catechisms is like another. The muzzle is more than a foot deep, and has a plaguy gunpowder look!"

"But this gun is not mounted; even if it were, it could only be set up for show," observed the captain.

"Put that cannon up once, and I'll answer for it that no Injin faces it. 'Twill be as good as a dozen sentinels," answered Joel. "As for mountin', I thought of that before I said a syllable about the crittur. There's the new truck-wheels in the court, all ready to hold it, and the carpenters can put the hinder part to the whull in an hour or two, and that in a way no Injin could tell the difference between it and a raal cannon, at ten yards."

"This is plausible, your honor," said Joyce, respectfully, "and it shows that Corporal Strides" — Joel insisted he was a sergeant, but the real Simon Pure never gave him a

title higher than that of corporal — "and it shows that Cor poral Strides has an idea of war. By mounting that piece and using it with discretion — refusing it at the right mo ment, and showing it at another — a great deal might b done with it, either in a siege or an assault. If your hono will excuse the liberty, I would respectfully suggest that i might be well to set the quaker on his legs, and plant him at the gate, as an exhorter."

The captain reflected a moment, and then desired the overseer to proceed in his account. The rest of Joel's story was soon told. He had mystified the strangers, according to his own account of the matter, so thoroughly, by affecting to withhold nothing, that they considered him as a sort of ally, and did not put him in confinement at all. It is true, he was placed *en surveillance;* but the duty was so carelessly performed, that, at the right moment, he had passed down the ravine, a direction in which a movement was not expected, and buried himself in the woods, so very effectually that it would have baffled pursuit, had any been attempted. After making a very long *détour*, that consumed hours, he turned the entire valley, and actually reached the Hut, under the cover of the rivulet and its bushes, or precisely by the route in which he and Mike had gone forth in quest of Maud the evening of the major's arrival. This latter fact, however, Joel had reasons of his own for concealing.

"You have told us nothing of Mr. Woods, Strides," the captain observed, when Joel's account was ended.

"Mr. Woods! I can tell the captain nothing of that gentleman; I supposed he was here."

The manner in which the chaplain had left the Hut, and his disappearance in the ravine, were then explained to the overseer, who evidently had quitted the mill, on his return before the divine performed his exploit. There was a sinister expression in Joel's eyes as he heard the account that might have given the alarm to men more suspicious than the two old soldiers; but he had the address to conceal all he felt or thought.

"If Mr. Woods has gone into the hands of the Injins in

his church shirt," rejoined the overseer, "his case is hopeless, so far as captivity is consarned. One of the charges agin the captain is, that the chaplain he keeps prays as regularly for the king as he used to do when it was lawful, and agreeable to public feelin'."

"This you heard, while under examination before the magistrate you have named?" demanded the captain.

"As good as that, and something more to the same p'int. The 'squire complained awfully of a minister's prayin' for the king and r'yal family, when the country was fightin' 'em."

"In that, the Rev. Mr. Woods only obeys orders," said the sergeant.

"But they say not. The orders is gone out now, they pretend, for no man to pray for any on 'em."

"Aye — orders from the magistrates, perhaps. But the Rev. Mr. Woods is a divine, and has his own superiors in the Church, and they must issue the commands that he obeys. I dare to say, your honor, if the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the commander-in-chief of the Church, whoever he may be, should issue a general order directing all the parsons not to pray for King George, the Rev. Mr. Woods would have no scruple about obeying. But it's a different thing when a justice of the peace undertakes to stand fugleman for the clergy. It's like a navy captain undertaking to wheel a regiment."

"Poor Woods!" exclaimed the captain; "had he been ruled by me, he would have dropped those prayers, and it would have been better for us both. But he is of your opinion, sergeant, and thinks that a layman can have no authority over a gownsman."

"And isn't he right, your honor! Think what a mess of it the militia officers make, when they undertake to meddle with a regular corps. Some of our greatest difficulties in the last war came from such awkward hands attempting to manage machines of which they had no just notions. As for praying, your honor, I'm nowise particular who I pray for, or what I pray for, so long as it be all set down in general orders that come from the right headquarters; and I

think the Rev. Mr. Woods ought to be judged by the same rule."

As the captain saw no use in prolonging the dialogue, he dismissed his companions. He then sought his wife, in order to make her acquainted with the actual state of things. This last was a painful duty, though Mrs. Willoughby and her daughters heard the truth with less of apprehension than the husband and father had anticipated. They had suffered so much from uncertainty, that there was a relief in learning the truth. The mother did not think the authorities of the colony would hurt her son, whom she fancied all men must, in a degree, love as she loved. Beulah thought of her own husband as Bob's safeguard; while Maud felt it to be comparative happiness to know he was unharmed, and still so near her.

This unpleasant duty discharged, the captain began to bethink him seriously of his military trust. After some reflection, and listening to a few more suggestions from Joyce, he consented to let the "quaker" be put on wheels. The carpenters were immediately set at work to achieve this job, which the sergeant volunteered to superintend in person. As for Joel, his wife and children, with the miller, occupied most of the morning; the day turning; and even drawing towards its close, ere he became visible, as had formerly been his wont, among the men of the settlement.

All this time, everything without the palisades lay in the silence of nature. The sun cast its glories athwart the lovely scene, as in one of the Sabbaths of the woods; but man was nowhere visible. Not a hostile Indian or white exhibited himself; and the captain began to suspect that, satisfied with their captures, the party had commenced its return towards the river, postponing his own arrest for some other occasion. So strong did this impression become towards the close of the day, that he was actually engaged in writing to some friends of influence in Albany and on the Mohawk to interpose their names and characters in his son's behalf, when the sergeant, about nine o'clock, the hour when he had been ordered to parade the guard for the first

half of the night, presented himself at the door of his room, to make an important report.

"What now, Joyce?" demanded the captain. "Are any of our fellows sleepy, and plead illness?"

"Worse than that, your honor, I greatly fear," was the answer. "Of the ten men your honor commanded me to detail for the guard, five are missing. I set them down as deserters."

"Deserters! This is serious, indeed; let the signal be made for a general parade — the people cannot yet have gone to bed; we will look into this."

As Joyce made it matter of religion "to obey orders," this command was immediately put in execution. In five minutes a messenger came to summon the captain to the court, where the garrison was under arms. The sergeant stood in front of the little party with a lantern, holding his muster-roll in his hand. The first glance told the captain that a serious reduction had taken place in his forces, and he led the sergeant aside to hear his report.

"What is the result of your inquiries, Joyce?" he demanded, with more uneasiness than he would have liked to betray openly.

"We have lost just half our men, sir. The miller, most of the Yankees, and two of the Dutchmen, are not on parade; neither is one of them to be found in his quarters. They have either gone over to the enemy, Captain Willoughby, or, disliking the appearance of things here, they have taken to the woods for safety."

"And abandoned their wives and children, sergeant! Men would scarcely do that."

"Their wives and children have deserted too, sir. Not a chick or child belonging to either of the runaways is to be found in the Hut."

CHAPTER XIX.

For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,
Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed and fled.
RICHARD III.

THIS was startling intelligence to receive just as night had shut in, and under the other circumstances of the case. Touching the men who still remained, Captain Willoughby conceived it prudent to inquire into their characters and names, in order to ascertain the ground he stood on, and to govern his future course accordingly. He put the question to the sergeant, therefore, as soon as he could lead him far enough from the little array to be certain he was out of ear-shot.

"We have Michael O'Hearn, Jamie Allen, the two carpenters, the three niggers, Joel, and the three Dutchmen that last came into the settlement, and the two lads that Strides engaged at the beginning of the year, left," was the answer. "These, counting your honor and myself, make just fifteen men; quite enough yet, I should think, to make good the house, in case of an assault — though I fear everything like an outwork must be abandoned."

"On the whole, these are the best of our men," returned the captain; "I mean the most trustworthy. I count on Mike, Jamie, and the blacks, as being as much to be relied on as we are ourselves. Joel, too, is a man of resources, if he will but do his duty under fire."

"Corporal Strides is still an untried soldier, your honor; though recruits, even, sometimes do wonders. Of course, I shall reduce the guard to half its former strength, as the men must have some sleep, sir."

"We must depend very much on your vigilance and mine to-night, Joyce. You shall take the guard till one,

when I will stand it for the rest of the night. I will speak to the men before you dismiss them. An encouraging word, just now, may be worth a platoon to us."

The sergeant seldom dissented from any suggestion of his commanding officer, and the scheme was carried out on the spot. The lantern was so placed as to permit the captain to see the heterogeneous row of countenances that was drawn up before him, and he proceeded : —

" It seems, my friends," he said, " that some of our people have been seized with a panic, and have deserted. These mistaken men have not only fled themselves, but they have induced their wives and children to follow them. A little reflection will show you to what distress all must be reduced by this ill-judged flight. Fifty miles from another settlement of any size, and more than thirty from even a single hut, beyond the cabin of a hunter, days must pass before they can reach a place of safety, even should they escape the savage foe that we know to be scouring the woods. The women and children will not have sufficient art to conceal their trail, nor sufficient strength to hold out against hunger and fatigue many hours. God forgive them for what they have done, and guide them through the difficulties and pains by which they are menaced! As for us, we must determine to do our whole duty, or at once to retire, with the consent of each other. If there is a man among you, then, who apprehends the consequences of standing to his arms, and of defending this house, let him confess it frankly ; he shall have leave to depart, with all that belongs to him, taking food and the means of subsistence and defense with him. I wish no man to remain with me and mine, but he who can do it cheerfully. The night is now dark, and by quitting the Hut at an early hour, such a start might be gained over any pursuers, as to place him in comparative security before morning. If any such man is here, let him now speak out honestly and fear nothing. The gate shall be opened for his march."

The captain paused, but not a soul answered. A common sentiment of loyalty seemed to bind every one of the listeners to his duty. The dark eyes of the negroes rolled

along the short rank to see who would be the first to desert their master, and grins of delight showed the satisfaction with which they noted the effect of the appeal. As for Mike, he felt too strongly to keep silence, and he muttered the passing impressions aloud.

"Och!" growled the county Leitrim-man, "is it a good journey that I wish the runaways? That it isn't, nor many a good male either, as they trudge alang t'rough the woods, with their own consciences forenent their eyes, pricking them up to come back, like so many t'ieves of the wor-r-ld, as they are, every mother's son of 'em, women and all. I'd niver do that; no, not if my head was all scalp, down to the soles of my fut, and an Injin was at every inch of it, to cut out his summer clothes of my own skin. Talk of religion among sich cr'atures! Why, there isn't enough moral in one of thim to carry him through the shortest prayer the Lord allows a Christian to utter. Divil burn 'em, say I, that's my kindest wish in their behalf."

The captain waited patiently for this soliloquy to terminate; then he dismissed the men, with a few more words of encouragement, and his thanks for the fidelity they, at least, had shown. By this time the night had got to be dark, and the court was much more so, on account of the shadows of the buildings, than places in the open air. As the captain turned aside to give his last instructions to Joyce, he discovered, by the light of the lantern the latter held, a figure standing at no great distance, quite dimly seen on account of its proximity to the walls of the Hut. It was clearly a man; and as all the males able to bear arms, a single sentinel outside the court excepted, were supposed to be in the group that had not yet separated, the necessity of ascertaining the character of this unlooked-for visitor flashed on the minds of both the old soldiers at the same instant. Joyce raised the lantern, as they moved quickly towards the motionless form, and its light glanced athwart a pair of wild, glowing, dark eyes, and the red visage of an Indian.

"Nick!" exclaimed the captain, "is that you? Wha'

has brought you here again, and how have you entered the palisades? Do you come as a friend, to aid us, or as an enemy?"

"Too much question, cap'in — too much like squaw; ask all togeder. Go to book-room; Nick follow; tell all he got to say."

The captain whispered the sergeant to ascertain whether the watch without was vigilant, when he led the way to the library, where, as he expected, he found his wife and daughters anxiously waiting his appearance.

"Oh! Hugh, I trust it is not as bad as we feared!" cried the mother, as the captain entered the room, closely attended by the Tuscarora; "our men cannot be so heartless as to desert us at such a moment?"

The captain kissed his wife, said a word or two of encouragement, and pointed to the Indian.

"Nick!" exclaimed all three of the females, in a breath; though the tones of their voices denoted very different sensations at the unexpected appearance of their old acquaintance. Mrs. Willoughby's exclamation was not without pleasure, for she thought the man her friend; Beulah's was filled with alarm, little Evert and savage massacres suddenly crossing the sensitive mind of the young mother; while Maud's tone had much of the stern resolution that she had summoned to sustain her in a moment of such fearful trial.

"Yes, Nick — Sassy Nick," repeated the Indian, in his guttural voice; "ole friend — you no glad see him?"

"That will depend on your errand," interposed the captain. "Are you one of the party that is now lying at the mill? But, stop; how did you get within the palisades? First answer me that."

"Come in? Tree no good to stop Injin. Can't do it wid branches, how do it widout? Want plenty of musket and plenty of soldier to do dat. Dis no garrison, cap'in, to make Nick afeard. Always tell him too much hole to be tight."

"This is not answering my question, fellow. By what means did you pass the palisades?"

"What means? Injin means, sartain. Come like ca jump like deer, slide like snake. Nick great Tuscaro chief; know well how warrior march, when he dig t hatchet."

"And Nick has been a great hanger-on of garrisons, a should know the use that I can make of his back. Y will remember, Tuscarora, that I have had you flogg more than once in my day."

This was said menacingly, and with more warmth, pe haps, than was prudent. It caused the listeners to start, if a sudden and new danger rose before their eyes, and th anxious looks he encountered warned the captain that h was probably going too far. As for Nick himself, th gathering thundercloud is not darker than his visage becam at the words he heard; it seemed, by the moral writhing o his spirit, as if every disgracing blow he had received was a that instant torturing his flesh anew, blended with the keenes feelings of ignominy. Captain Willoughby was startled a the effect he had produced; but it was too late to change hi course; and he remained in dignified quiet, awaiting th workings of the Tuscarora's mind.

It was more than a minute ere Nick made any reply Gradually, but very slowly, the expression of his visag changed. It finally became as stoical in expression a severe training could render the human countenance, an as unmoved as marble. Then he found the language he wanted.

"Listen!" said the Indian, sternly. "Cap'in ole man Got a head like snow on rock. He bold soldier; but he no got wisdom enough for gray hair. Why he put he hand rough, on place where whip strike? Wise man nebber do dat. Last winter he cold; fire wanted to make him warm. Much ice, much storm, much snow. World seem bad—fit only for bear, and snake, dat hide in rock. Well; winter gone away; ice gone away; snow gone away; storm gone away. Summer come in his place. Ebberyt'ing good—ebberyt'ing pleasant. Why t'ink of winter, when summer come, and drive him away wid pleasant sky?"

"In order to provide for its return. He who never thought

of the evil day, in the hour of his prosperity, would find that he has forgotten, not only a duty, but the course of wisdom."

"He not wise!" said Nick, sternly. "Cap'in pale-face chief. He got garrison; got soldier; got musket. Well, he flog warrior's back; make blood come. Dat bad enough; worse to put finger on old sore, and make 'e pain, and 'e shame, come back ag'in."

"Perhaps it would have been more generous, Nick, to have said nothing about it; but you see how I am situated; an enemy without, my men deserting, a bad lookout, and one finding his way into my very court-yard, and I ignorant of the means."

"Nick tell cap'in all about means. If red-men outside, shoot 'em; if garrison run away, flog garrison; if don't know, l'arn; but don't flog back, ag'in, on ole sore!"

"Well, well, say no more about it, Nick. Here is a dollar to keep you in rum, and we will talk of other matters."

Nick heeded not the money, though it was held before his eyes some little time to tempt him. Perceiving that the Tuscarora was now acting as a warrior and a chief, which Nick would do, and do well, on occasion, the captain pocketed the offering, and regulated his own course accordingly.

"At all events, I have a right to insist on knowing, first, by what means you entered the palisades; and, second, what business has brought you here, at night, and so suddenly."

"Ask Nick, cap'in, all he right to ask; but don't touch ole flog. How I cross palisade? Where your sentinel to stop Injin? One at gate; well, none all around, t'other place. Get in, up here, down dere, over yonder. Ten, twenty, t'ree spot — s'pose him tree? climb him. S'pose him palisade? — climb him, too. What help? — soldier out at gate, when Nick get over t'other end! Come in court, too, when he want. Half gate, half no gate. So easy, 'shamed to brag of. Cap'in once Nick's friend — went on same war-path — dat in ole time. Both warrior; both went

agin French garrison. Well; who crept in, close by can non, open gate, let pale man in? Great Tuscarora do dat no flog, den — no talk of ole sore, dat night!"

"This is all true enough, Wyandotté," — this was Nick loftiest appellation; and a grim but faint smile crossed h visage as he heard it again in the mouth of one who h known him when its sound carried terror to the hearts o his enemies, — "this is all true, Wyandotté, and I have e given you credit for it. On that occasion you were bold the lion, and as cunning as a fox — you were much honore for that exploit."

"No ole sore in dat, um?" cried Nick, in a way so start ling as to sicken Mrs. Willoughby to the heart. "No ca Nick dog, dat night. He all warrior, den — all face; n back."

"I have said you were honored for your conduct, Nick and paid for it. Now let me know what has brought yo here to-night, and whence you come."

There was another pause. Gradually the countenanc of the Indian became less and less fierce, until it lost its ex pression of malignant resentment in one in which huma emotions of a kinder nature predominated.

"Squaw good," he said, even gently, waving his hand to wards Mrs. Willoughby; "got son; love him like littl baby. Nick come six, two time before, runner from he son."

"My son, Wyandotté!" exclaimed the mother, "brin you any tidings, now, from my boy?"

"No bring tidin' — too heavy; Indian don't love to carr load — bring letter."

The cry from the three females was now common, ea holding out her hand, with an involuntary impulse, to re ceive the note. Nick drew the missive from a fold of hi garment, and placed it in the hand of Mrs. Willoughby, with a quiet grace that a courtier might have wished to equal in vain.

The note was short, and had been written in pencil, on leaf torn from some book of coarse paper. The hand writing, however, was at once recognized as Robert Wil

loughby's, though there was no address, nor any signature. The paper merely contained the following: —

"Trust to your defenses and to nothing else. This party has many white men in it disguised as Indians. I am suspected, if not known. You will be tampered with, but the wisest course is to be firm. If Nick is honest he can tell you more; if false, this note will be shown, even though it be delivered. Secure the inner gates, and depend more on the house itself than on the palisades. Fear nothing for me — my life can be in no danger."

This note was read by each in succession, Maud turning aside to conceal the tears that fell fast on the paper, as she perused it. She read it last, and was enabled to retain it; and precious to her heart was the boon at such a moment, when nearly every sensation of her being centered in intense feeling in behalf of the captive.

"We are told to inquire the particulars of you, Nick," observed the captain; "I hope you will tell us nothing but truth. A lie is so unworthy a warrior's mouth!"

"Nick didn't lie 'bout beaver dam! Cap'in no find him good, as Indian say?"

"In that you dealt honestly, and I give you credit for it. Has any one seen this letter but ourselves, yourself, and the person who wrote it?"

"What for ask? If Nick say no, cap'in t'ink he lie. Even fox tell trut' some time; why not Injin? Nick say no."

"Where did you leave my son, and when? Where is the party of red-skins at this moment?"

"All pale-face in hurry! Ask ten, one, four question, altogeder. Well; answer him so. Down here, at mill; down dere, at mill; half an hour, six, two, ten o'clock."

"I understand you to say that Major Willoughby was at the mill when you saw him last, and that this was only half an hour since?"

The Tuscarora nodded his head in assent, but made no other reply. Even as he did this, his keen eyes rolled over the pallid faces of the females, in a way to awaken the captain's distrust, and he resumed his questions in a tone

that partook more of the military severity of his anc habits, than of the gentler manner he had been accusto to use of late years.

"You know me, Nick," he said sternly, "and ough dread my displeasure."

"What cap'in mean now?" demanded the Indian quie

"That the same whip is in this fort that I always kep the other, in which you knew me to dwell; nor have I gotten how to use it."

The Tuscarora gazed at the captain with a very puzzl expression, though, in the main, his countenance appea to be ironical rather than fierce.

"What for talk of whip now?" he said. "Even Y geese gen'ral hide whip, when he see enemy. Soldier c fight when back sore. When battle near, den all g friend; when battle over, den flog, flog, flog. Why t so? Cap'in nebber strike Wyandotté."

"Your memory must be short to say this! I thou an Indian kept a better record of what passed."

"No man dare strike Wyandotté!" exclaimed the Indi with energy. "No man — pale-face or red-skin — can g blow on back of Wyandotté, and see sun set!"

"Well, well, Nick; we will not dispute on this poi but let bygones be bygones. What has happened, l happened, and I hope will never occur again."

"Dat happen to Nick — Sassy Nick — poor, drunk Nick; to Wyandotté, nebber!"

"I believe I begin to understand you now, Tuscaro and am glad I have a chief and a warrior in my hou instead of a poor, miserable outcast. Shall I have t pleasure of filling you a glass in honor of our old ca paigns?"

"Nick always dry; Wyandotté know no thirst. Ni beggar; ask for rum — pray for rum — t'ink of rum talk of rum — laugh for rum — cry for rum. Wyando don't know rum when he see him. Wyandotté beg not'i no, not his scalp."

"All this sounds well, and I am both willing and gl chief, to receive you in the character in which you give

to understand you have now come. A warrior of Wyandotté's high name is too proud to carry a forked tongue in his mouth, and I shall hear nothing but truth. Tell me, then, all you know about this party at the mill; what has brought it here, how you came to meet my son, and what will be the next step of his captors. Answer the questions in the order in which I put them."

"Wyandotté not newspaper to tell ebberyt'ing at once. Let cap'in talk like one chief speaking to anoder."

"Then tell me, first, what you know of this party at the mill. Are there many pale-faces in it?"

"Put 'em in the river," answered the Indian, sententiously; "water tell the trut'."

"You think there are many among them that would wash white?"

"Wyandotté know so. When did red warriors ever travel on their path like hogs in drove? One red-man there as Great Spirit made him; by his side two red-men as paint make 'em. This soon told on trail."

"You struck their trail, then, and joined their company in that manner?"

Another nod indicated the assent of the Indian. Perceiving that the Tuscarora did not intend to speak, the captain continued his interrogatories.

"And how did the trail betray the secret, chief?" he asked.

"Toe turn out — step too short — trail too broad — trail too plain — march too short."

"You must have followed them some distance, Wyandotté, to learn all this?"

"Follow from Mohawk — join 'em at mill. Tuscarora don't like too much travel with Mohawk."

"But, according to your account, there cannot be a great many red-skins in the party, if the white men so much outnumber them."

Nick now raised his right hand, showing all the fingers and the thumb at each exhibition, four several times. Then he raised it once, showing only the fore-finger and thumb.

"This makes twenty-two, Nick. Do you include yo self in the number?"

"Wyandotté a Tuscarora — he count Mohawks."

"True; are there any other red-men among them?"

"Oneida, so" — holding up four fingers only. A which he held up a single finger, adding, "Onoudaga, so

"Twenty-two Mohawks, four Oneidas, and a single On daga, make twenty-seven in all. To these how m whites am I to add? You counted them also?"

The Indian now showed both hands, with all the fing extended, repeating the gestures four times; then he sho one hand entire, and two fingers on the other.

"Forty-seven. Add these to the red-skins, and we seventy-four for the total. I had supposed them rat stronger than this, Wyandotté?"

"No stronger — no weaker — just so. Good many womans, too, among pale-faces."

"Old women! You are not speaking literally, Nic All that I have seen appear to be men."

"Got beard; but ole woman, too. Talk — talk — ta do not'in'. Dat what Injin call ole woman. Party, p party; cap'in beat 'em, if he fight like ole time."

"Well, this is encouraging, Wilhelmina, and Nick see to be dealing fairly with us."

"Now, inquire more about Robert, Hugh," said the w in whose maternal heart her children were always upp most.

"You hear, Nick; my wife is desirous of learning som thing about her son, next."

During the preceding dialogue, there had been someth equivocal in the expression of the Indian's face. Ev word he uttered about the party, its numbers, and his o manner of falling in with it, was true, and his countenan indicated that he was dealing fairly. Still, the captain fa cied that he could detect a covert fierceness in his eye a air, and he felt uneasiness even while he yielded him c dence. As soon as Mrs. Willoughby, however, interpos the gleam of ferocity that passed so naturally and read athwart the swarthy features of the savage, melted into

look of gentleness, and there were moments when it might be almost termed softness.

"Good to have moder," said Nick, kindly. "Wyandotté got no squaw — wife dead, moder dead, sister dead — all gone to land of spirits — by'm-by, chief follow. No one throw stone on his grave! Been on death-path long ago, but cap'in's squaw say 'Stop, Nick; little too soon, now; take medicine, and get well.' Squaw made to do good. Chief alway like 'e squaw when his mind not wild with war."

"And your mind, Wyandotté, is not wild with war, now," answered Mrs. Willoughby earnestly. "You will help a mother, then, to get her son out of the hands of merciless enemies?"

"Why you t'ink merciless? Because pale-face dress like Injin, and try to cheat?"

"That may be one reason; but I fear there are many others. Tell me, Wyandotté, how came you to discover that Robert was a prisoner, and by what means did he contrive to give you his letter?"

The Indian assumed a look of pride, a little blended with hauteur; for he felt that he was manifesting the superiority of a red-man over the pale-face, as he related the means through which he had made his discoveries.

"Read book on ground," Nick answered gravely. "Two book alway open before chief; one in sky, t'other on ground. Book in sky tell weather — snow, rain, wind, thunder, lightning, war; book on ground tell what happen."

"And what had this book on the ground to do with my son, Wyandotté?"

"Tell all about him. Major's trail first seen at mill. No moccasin — much boot. Soldier boot like letter — say great deal in few word. First t'ink it cap'in; but it too short. Den know it major."

"This sounds very well, Nick," interrupted the captain, "though you will excuse me if I say it is going a little too far. It seems impossible that you should know that the print of the foot was that of my son. How could you be certain of this?"

"How could, eh? Who follow trail from house, he to Hudson River? T'ink Nick blind, and can't see? T carora read his book well as pale-face read Bible." H Nick looked round him a moment, raised his fore-fing dropped his voice, and added earnestly, "See him at Bunk Hill — know him among ten, six, two t'ousand warri Know dat foot if meet him in Happy Hunting Ground."

"And why my son's foot in particular? The boot often changed, can never be exactly like its predecess and one boot is so much like another, that to me the thi seems impossible. This account of the boot, Nick, mak me distrust your whole story."

"What distrust?" demanded the Indian like lightning

"It means doubt, uncertainty — distrust."

"Don't believe, ha?"

"Yes, that is it, substantially. Don't more than ha believe, perhaps, would be nearer to the mark."

"Why, ole soldier alway distrust; squaw nebber? A moder — ha! — you t'ink Nick don't know son's trail - handsome trail, like young chief's?"

"I can readily believe Nick might recognize Bob's tra Hugh," expostulated Mrs. Willoughby. "He has a foot a thousand — you may remember how every one was accu tomed to speak of his beautiful foot, even when he was boy. As a man, I think it still more remarkable."

"Aye, go on, Nick, in this way, and my wife will belie all you say. There is no distrust in a mother's partialit certainly. You are an old courtier, and would make you way at St. James's."

"Major nebber tell about foot?" asked Nick, earnestl

"I remember nothing; and had he spoken of any suc thing, I must have heard it. But never mind the stor now; you saw the footprint, and knew it for my son' Did you ask to be admitted to his prison? or was your in tercourse secret?"

"Wyandotté too wise to act like squaw or boy. Se him, widout look. Talk, widout speak — hear, widout ea Major write letter, Nick take him. All done by eye an hand; not'in' done by tongue, or at council fire. Mo hawk blind like owl!"

"May I believe you, Tuscarora; or, incited by demons, do you come to deceive me?"

"Ole warrior look two time before he go; t'ink ten time before he say, yes. All good. Nick no affronted. Do so himself, and t'ink it right. Cap'in may believe all Nick say."

"Father!" cried Maud, with simple energy, "I will answer for the Indian's honesty. He has guided Robert so often, and been with him in so many trying scenes, he never can have the heart to betray him or us. Trust him, then; he may be of infinite service."

Even Captain Willoughby, little disposed as he was to judge Nick favorably, was struck with the gleam of manly kindness that shot across the dark face of the Indian, as he gazed at the glowing cheek and illuminated countenance of the ardent and beautiful girl.

"Nick seems disposed to make a truce with you, at least, Maud," he said, smiling, "and I shall now know where to look for a mediator, whenever any trouble arises between us."

"I have known Wyandotté, dear sir, from childhood, and he has ever been my friend. He promised me, in particular, to be true to Bob, and I am happy to say he has ever kept his word."

This was telling but half the story. Maud had made the Indian many presents, and most especially had she attended to his wants, when it was known he was to be the major's guide, the year previously, on his return to Boston. Nick had known her real father, and was present at his death. He was consequently acquainted with her actual position in the family of the Hutted Knoll; and what was of far more consequence in present emergencies, he had fathomed the depths of her heart, in a way our heroine could hardly be said to have done herself. Off her guard with such a being, Maud's solicitude, however, had betrayed her, and the penetrating Tuscarora had discerned that which had escaped the observation of father, and mother, and sister. Had Nick been a pale-face, of the class of those with whom he usually associated, his discovery would have gone

through the settlement, with scoffings and exaggeratio
but this forest gentleman, for such was Wyandotté, in s
of his degradation and numerous failings, had too m
consideration to make a woman's affections the subject
his coarseness and merriment. The secrets of Maud wo
not have been more sacred with her own brother, had s
a relative existed to become her confidant, than it was w
Saucy Nick.

"Nick gal's friend," observed the Indian, quietly; "
enough; what Nick say, Nick mean. What Nick mean,
do. Come, cap'in; time to quit squaw, and talk ab
war."

At this hint, which was too plain to be misunderstoo
Captain Willoughby bade the Indian withdraw to the co
promising to follow him, as soon as he could hold a sh
conference with Joyce, who was now summoned to t
council. The subject of discussion was the manner
which the Tuscarora had passed the stockade, and the pr
ability of his being true. The sergeant was disposed to
trust all red-men, and he advised putting Nick under arr
and to keep him in durance, until the return of light at le

"I might almost say, your honor, that such are orde
sir. The advice to soldiers carrying on war with savag
tells us that the best course is to pay off treachery w
treachery; and treachery is a red-skin's manual exerci
There is O'Hearn will make a capital sentinel, for t
fellow is as true as the best steel in the army. M
Woods's room is empty, and it is so far out of the w
that nothing will be easier than to keep the savage sn
enough. Besides, by a little management, he mig
fancy we were doing him honor all the while!"

"We will see, sergeant," answered the captain. "
has a bad appearance, and yet it may be the wisest thi
we can do. Let us first go the rounds, taking Nick wi
us for safety, and determine afterwards."

CHAPTER XX.

His hand was stayed — he knew not why;
'Twas a presence breathed around —
A pleading from the deep blue sky,
And up from the teeming ground.
It told of the care that lavished had been
In sunshine and in dew —
Of the many things that had wrought a screen
When peril round it grew.

MRS. SEBA SMITH.

THE desertions gave not only the captain, but his great support and auxiliary, the sergeant, the gravest apprehensions. A disposition of that nature is always contagious, men abandoning a failing cause much as rats are known to quit a sinking ship. It is not a matter of surprise, therefore, that the distrust which accompanied the unexpected appearance of the Tuscarora, became associated with this falling off in the loyalty of the garrison, in the minds of the two old soldiers.

"I do think, your honor," said Joyce, as they entered the court together, "that we may depend on O'Hearn, and Jamie, and Strides. The latter, as a matter of course, being a corporal, or sergeant, as he calls himself; and the two first, as men who have no ties but such as would be likely to keep them true to this family. But here is the corporal to speak for himself."

As this was said, Corporal Strides, as the sergeant persisted in terming Joel, on the ground that being but one step higher himself, the overseer could justly claim no rank of greater pretension, approached the captain, taking care to make the military salute which Joyce had never succeeded before in extracting from him, notwithstanding a hundred admonitions on the subject.

"This is a distressing affair, Captain Willoughby," ob-

served Joel, in his most jesuitical manner; "and to me is altogether onaccountable! It does seem to me a natur', for a man to desert his own household and hun (Joel meant "home") "in the hour of trial. If a fell being wunt" (Anglice "won't") "stand by his wife children, he can hardly be expected to do any of duties."

"Quite true, Strides," answered the confiding capta "though these deserters are not altogether as bad as represent, since you will remember they have carried th wives and children with them."

"I believe they have, sir — yes, that must be allow to be true, and that it is which to me seems the m extr'or'nary. The very men that a person would calcil on the most, or the heads of families, have desarted, wh them that remain behind are mostly single!"

"If we single men have no wives and children of own to fight for, Strides," observed Joyce, with a lit military stiffness, "we have the wife and children of C tain Willoughby; no man who wishes to sell his l dearly need look for a better motive."

"Thank you, sergeant," the captain said, feeling. "On you I can rely, as on myself. So long as I h you and Joel here, and Mike and the blacks, and the r of the brave fellows who have stood by me thus far shall not despair. We can make good the house agai ten times our own number. But it is time to look to t Indians."

"I was going to speak to the captain about Nick," in Joel, who had listened to the eulogium on his o fidelity with some qualms of conscience. "I can't say like the manner he has passed between the two parti and that fellow has always seemed to me as if he owed t captain a mortal grudge; when an Injin does owe grudge he is pretty sartin to pay it in full."

"This has passed over my mind, too, I will confe Joel; yet Nick and I have been on reasonably good ter when one comes to remember his character on the o side, and the fact that I have commanded a frontier g

rison on the other. If I have had occasion to flog him a few times, I have also had occasion to give him more rum than has done him good, with now and then a dollar."

"There I think the captain miscalculates," observed Joel, with a knowledge of human nature that would have been creditable to him, had he practiced on it himself. "No man is thankful for rum when the craving is off, sin' he knows he has been taking an inimy into his stomach; and as for the money, it was much the same as giving the liquor, seein' that it went for liquor as soon as he could trot down to the mill. A man will seek his revenge for rum as soon as for anything else, when he gets to feel injuries uppermost. Besides, I s'pose the captain knows an injury will be remembered long a'ter a favor is forgotten."

"This may be true, Strides, and certainly I shall keep my eyes on the Indian. Can you mention any particular act that excites your suspicion?"

"Don't the captain think Nick may have had suthin' to do with the desartions? A dozen men would scarce desart all at once, as it might be, onless some one was at the bottom of it."

This was true enough, certainly, though Joel chose to keep out of view all his own machinations and arts on the subject. The captain was struck by the suggestion, and he determined to put his first intention in respect to Nick in force immediately. Still it was necessary to proceed with caution, the state of the Hut rendering a proper watch and a suitable prison difficult to be obtained. These circumstances were mentioned to the overseer, who led the way to the part of the building occupied by his own family; and throwing open the doors, ostentatiously exhibited Phœbe and her children in their customary beds, at a moment when so many others had proved recreant. His professed object was to offer a small closet in his own rooms as a prison for Nick, remarking he must be an ingenious savage indeed, if he could escape the vigilance of so many watchful eyes as would then be on him.

"I believe you, Strides," said the captain, smiling as he walked away from the place; "if he can escape Phœbe

and her children, the fellow must be made of quicksil
Still, I have a better prison in view. I am glad to
this proof, however, of your own fidelity, by finding
your family in their beds, for those are not wanting
would have me suspect even you."

"Me! Well, if the captain can't count on his
overseer, I should like to ask such persons on whom
can count? Madam Willoughby and the young la
isn't more likely to remain true than I am myself, I sh
think. What in reason, or natur', or all lawful obje
could make me" —

Joel was about to run into that excess of vindicat
that is a little apt to mark guilt; but the captain cut
short by telling him it was unnecessary, recommend
vigilance, and walking away in search of Nick.

The Indian was found standing beneath the arch of
gateway, upright, motionless, and patient. A lantern
kept burning here, the place being used as a sort of gua
house, and by its light it was easy to perceive the stat
the still unhung leaf of the passage. This leaf, howe
was propped in its place by strong timbers, and on
whole many persons would think it the most secure
of the gate. Captain Willoughby observed that
Indian was studying this arrangement when he ente
the place himself. The circumstance caused him une
ness, and quickened his determination to secure
Indian.

"Well, Nick," he said, concealing his intention under
appearance of indifference, "you see our gates are w
fastened, and steady hands and quick eyes will do the re
It is getting late, and I wish to have you comfortab
lodged before I lie down myself. Follow me, and I w
show you to a place where you will be at your ease."

The Tuscarora understood the captain's object the
stant he spoke of giving him comfortable lodgings, a b
being a thing that was virtually unknown to his habi
But he raised no objections, quietly treading in the othe
footsteps, until both were in the bedroom of the abs
Mr. Woods. The apartments of the chaplain were abo

the library, and being in the part of the house that was fortified by the cliff, they had dormer windows that looked towards the forest. The height of these windows, the captain thought, would be a sufficient security against flight; and by setting Mike and one of the Plinies on the lookout, to relieve each other at intervals of four hours, he thought the Tuscarora might be kept until the return of light. The hour when he most apprehended danger was that which just precedes the day, sleep then pressing the heaviest on the sentinels' eyelids, and rest having refreshed the assailants.

"Here, Wyandotté, I intend you shall pass the night," said the captain, assuming as much courtesy of manner as if he were doing the honors of his house to an invited and honored guest. "I know you despise a bed, but there are blankets, and by spreading them on the floor you can make your own arrangements."

Nick made a gesture of assent, looking cautiously around him, carefully avoiding every appearance of curiosity at the same time, more in pride of character, however, than in cunning. Nevertheless, he took in the history of the locality at a glance.

"It is well," he said; "a Tuscarora chief no t'ink of sleep. Sleep come standing, walking, where he will, when he will. Dog eats, den lie down to sleep; warrior always ready. Good-by, cap'in — to-morrow see him ag'in."

"Good night, Nick. I have ordered your old friend Mike, the Irishman, to come and sit in your room, lest you might want something in the night. You are good friends with Mike, I believe; I chose him on that account."

The Indian understood this, too; but not an angry gleam, no smile, nor any other sign betrayed his consciousness of the captain's motives.

"Mike, good," he answered, with emphasis. "Long tongue — short t'ink. Say much, mean little. Heart sound, like hard oak — mind like spunk — burn quick; no too much strong."

This sententious and accurate delineation of the county Leitrim-man's characteristics induced a smile in the captain;

but O'Hearn entering at the moment, and possessing his entire confidence, he saw no use in replying. In another minute the two worthies were left in possession of the bedroom, Michael having received a most solemn injunction not to be tempted to drink.

It was now so late the captain determined to let the regular watches of the night take their course. He held a short consultation with Joyce, who took the first ward, and then threw himself on a mattress in his clothes, his affectionate wife having done the same thing, by the side of her daughters and grandson, in an adjoining room. In a short time the sound of footsteps ceased in the Hut, and one unacquainted with the real state of the household might have fancied that the peace and security of one of its ancient midnights were reigning about the Knoll.

It was just two in the morning, when the sergeant tapped lightly at the door of his commanding officer's room. The touch was sufficient to bring the captain to his feet, and he instantly demanded the news.

"Nothing but sentry-go, your honor," replied Joyce. "I am as fresh as a regiment that is just marching out of barracks, and can easily stand the guard till daylight. Still, as it was orders to call your honor at two, I could do no less, you know, sir."

"Very well, sergeant. I will just wash my eyes, and be with you in a minute. How has the night gone?"

"Famously quiet, sir. Not even an owl to trouble it. The sentinels have kept their eyes wide open, dread of the scalping-knife being a good wakener, and no sign of any alarm has been seen. I will wait for your honor in the court, the moment of relieving guard being often chosen by a cunning enemy for the assault."

"Yes," sputtered the captain, his face just emerging from the water, "if he happen to know when that is."

In another minute, the two old soldiers were together in the court, waiting the return of Jamie Allen with his report, the mason having been sent round to the beds of the fresh men to call the guard. It was not long, however, before the old man was seen hastening towards the spot where Joyce had bid him come.

"The Lord ha' mairey on us, and on a' wretched sinners!" exclaimed Jamie, as soon as near enough to be heard without raising his voice on too high a key, "there are just the beds of the three Connecticut lads that were to come into the laird's guard, as empty as a robin's nest fra' which the yang ha' flown!"

"Do you mean, Jamie, that the boys have deserted?"

"It's just that; and no need of ca'ing it by anither name. The Hoose o' Hanover wad seem to have put the de'il in a' the lads, women and children included, and to have raised up a spirit o' disaffection, that is fast leaving us to carry on this terrible warfare with our ain hearts and bodies."

"With your honor's permission," said the sergeant, "I would ask Corporal Allen if the deserters have gone off with their arms and accoutrements?"

"Airms? Aye, and legs, and a' belonging to 'em, with mair that is the lawfu' property of the laird. Not so much as a flint is left behind."

"Then we may count on seeing all the fellows in the enemy's ranks," the sergeant quietly remarked, helping himself to the tobacco from which he had refrained throughout the previous hours of the night, Joyce being too much of a martinet to smoke or chew on duty. "It's up-hill work, your honor, when every deserter counts two, in this manner. The civil wars, however, are remarkable for this sort of wheeling, and facing to the right-about; the same man often changing his colors two or three times in a campaign."

Captain Willoughby received the news of this addition to his ill-luck with an air of military stoicism, though he felt, in reality, more like a father and a husband on the occasion, than like a hero. Accustomed to self-command, he succeeded in concealing the extent of his uneasiness, while he immediately set about inquiring into the extent of the evil.

"Joel is to join my watch," he said, "and he may throw some light on this affair. Let us call him at once; for a few minutes may prove of importance."

Even while speaking, the captain crossed the court, accompanied by the sergeant and mason; and, ceremony

being little attended to on such occasions, they all entered the quarters of Strides in a body. The place was empty! Man, woman, and children had abandoned the spot, seemingly in a body, and this, too, far from empty-handed. The manner in which the room had been stripped, indeed, was the first fact which induced the captain to believe that a man so much and so long trusted would desert him in a strait so serious. There could be no mistake; and, for a moment, the husband and father felt such a sinking of the heart as would be apt to follow the sudden conviction that his enemies must prevail.

"Let us look further, Joyce," he said, "and ascertain the extent of the evil at once."

"This is a very bad example, your honor, that Corporal Strides has set the men, and we may expect to hear of more desertions. A non-commissioned officer should have had too much pride for this! I have always remarked, sir, in the army, that when a non-commissioned officer left his colors, he was pretty certain to carry off a platoon with him."

The search justified this opinion of the sergeant. A complete examination of the quarters of all the men having been made, it was ascertained that every white man in the Hut, the sergeant, James Allen, and a young New England laborer of the name of Blodget excepted, had abandoned the place. Every man had carried off with him his arms and ammunition, leaving the rooms as naked of defense as they had been before they were occupied. Women and children, too, were all gone, proving that the flights had been made deliberately, and with concert. This left the Hut to be defended by its owner, the sergeant, the two Plinies and a young descendant of the same color, Jamie Allen, Blodget, and Mike, who had not yet been relieved from his ward over the Indian; eight men in all, who might possibly receive some assistance from the four black females in the kitchen.

The captain examined this small array of force, every man but Mike being up and in the line, with a saddened countenance; for he remembered what a different appear

ance it made only the previous day, when he had his gallant son too with him, a host in himself. It added mortification to regret, also, when he remembered that this great loss had been made without a single blow having been struck in defense of his precious family and his lawful rights.

"We must close the gate of the court, and bar it at once, Joyce," the captain said, as soon as fully apprised of the true state of his force. "It will be quite sufficient if we make good the house, with this handful of men; giving up all hope of doing anything with the stockade. It is the facility offered by the open gateway that has led to all this mischief."

"I don't know, your honor. When desertion once fairly gets into a man's mind, it's wonderful the means he will find to bring about his wishes. Corporal Strides, no doubt, has passed his family and his kit through both gates; for, being in authority, our people were hardly disciplined enough to understand the difference between a non-commissioned officer on guard, and one off guard; but there were a hundred ways to mischief, even had there been no gate. Jamie, take one of the blacks, and bar the inner gate. What is your honor's pleasure next?"

"I wish my mind were at ease on the subject of the Tuscarora. With Nick's assistance as a runner and spy, and even as a sharp-shooter, we should be vastly stronger. See to the gate yourself, sergeant, then follow me to Mr. Woods's room."

This was done, the captain waiting for his companion on the threshold of the outer door. Ascending the narrow stairs, they were soon on the floor above, and were happy to find the door of the Tuscarora's prison fastened without, as they had left it; this precaution having been taken as a salutary assistance to O'Hearn's sagacity. Undoing these fastenings, the sergeant stepped aside to allow his superior to precede him, as became their respective stations. The captain advanced, holding the lantern before him, and found an empty room. Both Nick and Mike were gone, though it was not easy to discover by what means they had quitted the place. The door was secure, the windows were down,

and the chimney was too small to allow of the passage of a human body. The defection of the Irishman caused the captain great pain, while it produced surprise even in the sergeant. Mike's fidelity had been thought of proof; and, for an instant, the master of the place was disposed to believe some evil spirit had been at work to corrupt his people.

"This is more than I could have expected, Joyce!" he said, as much in sorrow as in anger. "I should as soon have looked for the desertion of old Pliny as that of Mike!"

"It is extr'or'nary, sir; but one is never safe without in-and-in discipline. A drill a week, and that only for an hour or two of a Saturday afternoon, Captain Willoughby, may make a sort of country militia, but it will do nothing for the field. 'Talk of enlisting men for a year, Sergeant Joyce,' said old Colonel Flanker to me, one day in the last war — 'why, it will take a year to teach a soldier how to eat. Your silly fellows in the provincial assemblies fancy because a man has teeth, and a stomach, and an appetite, that he knows how to eat; but eating is an art, sergeant, and military eating above all other branches of it; and I maintain a soldier can no more learn how to eat,' as a soldier, the colonel meant, your honor, 'than he can learn to plan a campaign by going through the manual exercise.' For my part, Captain Willoughby, I have always thought it took a man his first five years' enlistment to learn how to obey orders."

"I had thought that Irishman's heart in the right place, Joyce, and counted as much on him as I did on you!"

"On me, Captain Willoughby!" answered the sergeant, in a tone of mortification. "I should think your honor would have made some difference between your old orderly — a man who had served thirty years in your own regiment, and most of the time in your own company, and a bit of a wild Hibernian of only ten years' acquaintance, and he a man who never saw a battalion paraded for real service!"

"I see my error now, Joyce; but Michael had so

much blundering honesty about him, or seemed to have, that I have been his dupe. It is too late, however, to repine; the fellow is gone; it only remains to ascertain the manner of his flight. May not Joel have undone the fastenings of the door, and let him and the Indian escape together, in common with the rest of the deserters?"

"I secured that door, sir, with my own hands, in a military manner, and know that it was found as I left it. The Rev. Mr. Woods's bed seems to have been disturbed; perhaps that may furnish a clue."

A clue the bed did furnish, and it solved the problem. The bed-cord was removed, and both the sheets and one of the blankets were missing. This directed the inquiry to the windows, one of which was not closed entirely. A chimney stood near the side of this window, and by its aid it was not difficult to reach the ridge of the roof. On the inner side of the roof was the staging, or walk, already mentioned; and once on that, a person could make the circuit of the entire roof in perfect safety. Joyce mounted to the ridge, followed by the captain, and gained the staging with a little effort, whence they proceeded round the buildings to ascertain if the rope was not yet hanging over the exterior, as a means of descent. It was found as expected, and withdrawn lest it might be used to introduce enemies within the house.

These discoveries put the matter of Michael's delinquency at rest. He had clearly gone off with his prisoner, and might next be looked for in the ranks of the besiegers. The conviction of this truth gave the captain more than uneasiness — it caused him pain; for the county Leitrim-man had been a favorite with the whole family, and most especially with his daughter Maud.

"I do not think you and the blacks will leave me, Joyce," he observed, as the sergeant and himself descended by the common passage to the court. "On you I can rely, as I would rely on my noble son, were he with me at this moment."

"I beg your honor's pardon — few words tell best for a man, deeds being his duty — but if your honor will have

the condescension just to issue your orders, the manner in which they shall be obeyed will tell the whole story."

"I am satisfied of that, sergeant; we must put shoulder to shoulder, and die in the breach, should it be necessary, before we give up the place."

By this time the two old soldiers were again in the court, where they found all their remaining force of the male sex; the men being too uneasy, indeed, to think of going to their pallets until better assured of their safety. Captain Willoughby ordered Joyce to draw them up in line again, when he addressed them once more in person.

"My friends," the captain commenced, "there would be little use in attempting to conceal from you our real situation; nor would it be strictly honest. You see here every man on whom I can now depend for the defense of my fireside and family. Mike has gone with the rest, and the Indian has escaped in his company. You can make up your own opinions of our chances of success, but my resolution is formed. Before I open a gate to the merciless wretches without, who are worse than the savages of the wilderness, possessing all their bad and none of their redeeming qualities, it is my determination to be buried under the ruins of this dwelling. But you are not bound to imitate my example; and if any man among you, black or white, regrets being here at this moment, he shall still have arms and ammunition and food given him, the gates shall be opened, and he may go freely to seek his safety in the forest. For God's sake let there be no more desertions; he that wishes to quit me, may now quit me unmolested; but, after this moment, martial law will be enforced, and I shall give orders to shoot down any man detected in treachery, as I would shoot down a vicious dog."

This address was heard in profound silence. No man stirred, nor did any man speak.

"Blodget," continued the captain, "you have been with me a shorter time than any other person present, and cannot feel the same attachment to me and mine as the rest. You are the only native American among us, Joyce ex-

cepted — for we count the blacks as nothing in respect to country — and may feel that I am an Englishman born, as I fear has been the case with the rest of your friends. Perhaps I ought not to ask you to remain. Take your arms, then, and make the best of your way to the settlements. Should you reach Albany, you might even serve me essentially by delivering a letter I will confide to you, and which will bring us effectual succor."

The young man did not answer, though his fingers worked on the barrel of his musket, and he shifted his weight from leg to leg like one whose inward feelings were moved.

"I believe I understand you, Captain Willoughby," he said at length, "though I think you don't understand me. I know you old country people think meanly of us new country people, but I suppose that's in the natur' of things; then, I allow Joel Strides's conduct has been such as to give you reason to judge us harshly. But there is a difference among us, as well as among the English; and some of us — I won't say I am such a man, but actions speak louder than words, and all will be known in the end — but some of us will be found true to our bargains, as well as other men."

"Bravely answered, my lad," cried the sergeant heartily, and looking round at his commander with exultation, to congratulate him on having such a follower; "this is a man who will obey orders through thick and thin, I'll answer for it, your honor. Little does he care who's king or who's governor, so long as he knows his captain and his corps."

"There you are mistaken, Sergeant Joyce," the youth observed firmly. "I'm for my country, and I'd quit this house in a minute, did I believe Captain Willoughby meant to help the crown. But I have lived long enough here to know he is at the most neutral; though I think he rather favors the side of the colonies than that of the crown."

"You have judged rightly, Blodget," observed the captain. "I do not quite like this declaration of independ-

ence, though I can scarce blame Congress for having made it. Of the two, I think the Americans nearest right and I now conceive myself to be more of an American than an Englishman. I wish this to be understood, Joyce."

"Do you, sir? It's just as your honor pleases. I didn't know which side it was your pleasure to support, nor does it make any great difference with most of us. Orders are orders, let them come from king or colonies. I would take the liberty of recommending, your honor, that this young man be promoted. Strides's desertion has left a vacancy among the corporals, and we shall want another for the guard. It would hardly do to make a nigger a corporal."

"Very well, Joyce, have it as you wish," interrupted the captain, a little impatiently; for he perceived he had a spirit to deal with in Blodget that must hold such trifles at their true value. "Let it be Corporal Allen and Corporal Blodget in future."

"Do you hear, men? These are general orders. The relieved guard will fall out, and try to get a little sleep, as we shall parade again half an hour before day."

Alas! the relieved guard, like the relief itself, consisted of only two men, Corporal Blodget and Pliny the younger; old Pliny, in virtue of his household work, being rated as an idler. These five, with the captain and the sergeant, made the number of the garrison seven, which was the whole male force that now remained.

Captain Willoughby directed Joyce and his two companions to go to their pallets, notwithstanding, assuming the charge of the lookout himself, and profiting by the occasion to make himself better acquainted with the character of his new corporal than circumstances had hitherto permitted.

CHAPTER XXI.

For thee they fought, for thee they fell,
And their oath was on thee laid ;
To thee the clarions raised their swell,
And the dying warriors prayed.

PERCIVAL.

THE distaste for each other which existed between th people of New England and those of the adjoining colonies, anterior to the war of the Revolution, is a matter of history. It was this feeling that threw Schuyler, one of the ablest and best men in the service of his country, into the shade, a year later than the period of which we are writing. This feeling was very naturally produced, and, under the circumstances, was quite likely to be active in a revolution. Although New England and New York were contiguous territories, a wide difference existed between their social conditions. Out of the larger towns, there could scarcely be said to be a gentry at all in the former ; while the latter, a conquered province, had received the framework of the English system, possessing lords of the manor, and divers other of the fragments of the feudal system. So great was the social equality throughout the interior of the New England provinces, indeed, as almost to remove the commoner distinctions of civilized associations, bringing all classes surprisingly near the same level, with the exceptions of the very low, or some rare instance of an individual who was raised above his neighbors by unusual wealth, aided perhaps by the accidents of birth, and the advantages of education.

The results of such a state of society are easily traced. Habit had taken the place of principles, and a people accustomed to see even questions of domestic discipline referred either to the Church or to public sentiment, and who knew

few or none of the ordinary distinctions of social intercourse, submitted to the usages of other conditions of society with singular distaste and stubborn reluctance. The native of New England deferred singularly to great wealth in 1776, as he is known to defer to it to-day; but it was opposed to all his habits and prejudices to defer to social station. Unused to intercourse with what was then called the great world of the provinces, he knew not how to appreciate its manners or opinions; and, as is usual with the provincial, he affected to despise that which he neither practiced nor understood. This, at once, indisposed him to acknowledge the distinctions of classes; and when accident threw him into the adjoining province, he became marked, at once, for decrying the usages he encountered, comparing them with singular self-felicitation to those he had left behind him; sometimes with justice, beyond a doubt, but oftener in provincial ignorance and narrow bigotry.

A similar state of things, on a larger scale, has been witnessed, more especially in western New York, since the peace of '83; the great inroads of emigrants from the New England States having almost converted that district of country into an eastern colony. Men of the world, while they admit how much has been gained in activity, available intelligence of the practical school, and enterprise, regret that the fusion has been quite so rapid and so complete; it being apparently a law of nature that nothing precious that comes of man shall be enjoyed altogether without alloy.

The condition in which Captain Willoughby was now placed, might have been traced to causes connected with the feelings and habits above alluded to. It was distasteful to Joel Strides, and one or two of his associates, to see a social chasm as wide as that which actually existed between the family of the proprietor of the Knoll and his own, growing no narrower; and an active cupidity, with the hopes of confiscations, or an abandonment of the estate, came in aid of this rankling jealousy of station — the most uneasy, as it is the meanest, of all our vices. Utterly incapable of appreciating the width of that void which sepa

rates the gentleman from the man of coarse feelings and illiterate vulgarity, he began to preach that doctrine of exaggerated and mistaken equality which says "One man is as good as another," a doctrine that is nowhere engrafted even on the most democratic of our institutions to-day, since it would totally supersede the elections, and leave us to draw lots for public trusts, as men are drawn for juries. On ordinary occasions, the malignant machinations of Strides would probably have led to no results; but, aided by the opinions and temper of the times, he had no great difficulty in undermining his master's popularity, by incessant and well-digested appeals to the envy and cupidity of his companions. The probity, liberality, and manly sincerity of Captain Willoughby often counteracted his schemes, it is true; but, as even the stone yields to constant attrition, so did Joel finally succeed in overcoming the influences of these high qualities, by dint of perseverance and cunning, not a little aided by certain auxiliaries freely obtained from the Father of Lies.

As our tale proceeds, Joel's connection with the late movement will become more apparent, and we prefer leaving the remainder of the explanations to take their proper places in the course of the narrative.

Joyce was so completely a matter of drill, that he was in a sound sleep three minutes after he had lain down, the negro who belonged to his guard imitating his industry in this particular with equal coolness. As for the thoughtful Scotchman, Jamie Allen, sleep and he were strangers that night. To own the truth, the disaffection of Mike not only surprised, but it disappointed him. He remained in the court, therefore, conversing on the subject with the "laird," after his companions had fallen asleep.

"I wad na ha' thought that o' Michael," he said; "for the man had an honest way with him, and was so seeming valiant, that I could na ha' supposed him capable of proving a desairter. Mony's the time that I've heard him swear — for Michael was an awfu' hand at that vice, when his betters were no near to rebuke him — but often has he swore that Madam, and her winsome daughters, were the pride of his een. Aye, and their delight, too."

"The poor fellow has yielded to my unlucky fortune, Jamie," returned the captain, "and I sometimes think it were better had you all imitated his example."

"Begging pairdon, Captain Willoughby, for the familiarity, but ye're just wrang, fra' beginning to end, in the supposition. No man with a hairt in his body wad desairt ye in a time like this, and na mair's to be said in the matter. Nor do I think that luuk has had anything to do with Michael's deficiency, unless ye ca' it luuk to be born and educated in a misguided religion. Michael's catholicity is at the bottom of his backsliding, ye'll find, if ye look closely into the matter."

"I do not see how that is to be made out, Allen; all sects of the Christian religion, I believe, teaching us to abide by our engagements, and to perform our duties."

"Na doubt — na doubt, 'Squire Willoughby — there's a seeming desire to teach as much in a' churches; but ye'll no deny that the creatur' o' Rome wears a mask, and that catholicity is, at the best, but a wicked feature to enter into the worship of God."

"Catholicism, Jamie, means adherence to the Catholic Church" —

"Just that — just that," interrupted the Scot, eagerly; "and it's that o' which I complain. All Protestants — wather fully disposed, or ainly half disposed, as may be the case with the English kirk — all Protestants agree in condemning the very word catholic, which is a sign and a symbol of the foul woman o' Babylon."

"Then, Jamie, they agree in condemning what they don't understand. I should be sorry to think I am not a member of the catholic church myself."

"Yersal'! No, Captain Willoughby, ye're no Catholic, though you are a bit akin to it, perhaps. I know that Mr. Woods, that's now in the hands o' the savages, prays for the Catholics, and professes to believe in what he ca's the Holy Catholic Kirk;' but then I've always supposed that was in the way o' Christian charity like; for one is obleeged to use decent language, ye'll be acknowledging, sir, in the pulpit, if it's only for appearance' sake."

"Well, well, Jamie; a more fitting occasion may occur for discussing matters of this nature, and we will postpone the subject to another time. I may have need of your services an hour or two hence, and it will be well for every man to come to the work fresh and clear-headed. Go to your pallet then, and expect an early call."

The mason was not a man to oppose such an order coming from the "laird;" and he withdrew, leaving the captain standing in the centre of the court quite alone. We say alone; for young Blodget had ascended to the gallery or staging that led around the inner sides of the roofs, while the negro on guard was stationed at the gateway, as the only point where the Hut could be possibly carried by a *coup-de-main*. As the first of these positions commanded the best exterior view from the inside of the buildings, the captain mounted the stairs he had so recently descended, and joined the young Rhode Islander at his post.

The night was starlight, but the elevation at which the two watchers were placed was unfavorable to catching glimpses of any lurking enemy. The height confounded objects with the ground on which they were placed, though Blodget told the captain he did not think a man could cross the palisades without his being seen. By moving along the staging on the southern side of the quadrangle, he could keep a tolerable lookout on the front and two flanks, at the same time. Still, this duty could not be performed without considerable risk, as the head and shoulders of a man moving along the ridge of the building would be almost certain to attract the eye of any Indian without. This was the first circumstance that the captain remarked on joining his companion, and gratitude induced him to point it out, in order that the other might, in a degree at least, avoid the danger.

"I suppose, Blodget, this is the first of your service," said Captain Willoughby, "and it is not easy to impress on a young man the importance of unceasing vigilance against savage artifices."

"I admit the truth of all you say, sir," answered Blodget,

"though I do not believe any attempt will be made on the house until the other side has sent in what the sergeant calls another flag."

"What reason have you for supposing this?" asked the captain, in a little surprise.

"It seems unreasonable for men to risk their lives when an easier way to conquest may seem open to them. That is all I meant, Captain Willoughby."

"I believe I understand you, Blodget. You think Joel and his friends have succeeded so well in drawing off my men, that they may be inclined to wait a little, in order to ascertain if further advantages may not be obtained in the same way."

Blodget confessed that he had some such thoughts in his mind, while, at the same time, he declared that he believed the disaffection would go no further.

"It is not easy for it to do so," returned the captain, smiling a little bitterly, as he remembered how many who had eaten of his bread, and had been cared for by him in sickness and adversity, had deserted him in his need, "unless they persuade my wife and daughters to follow those who have led the way."

Respect kept Blodget silent for a minute; then uneasiness induced him to speak.

"I hope Captain Willoughby don't distrust any who now remain with him," he said. "If so, I know I must be the person."

"Why you in particular, young man? With you, surely, I have every reason to be satisfied."

"It cannot be Sergeant Joyce, for he will stay until he gets your orders to march," the youth replied, not altogether without humor in his manner; "and as for the Scotchman, he is old, and men of his years are not apt to wait so long, if they intend to be traitors. The negroes all love you as if you were their father, and there is no one but me left to betray you."

"I thank you for this short enumeration of my strength, Blodget, since it gives me new assurance of my people's fidelity. You I will not distrust; the others I cannot, and

there is a feeling of high confidence — what do you see? — why do you lower your piece and stand at guard in this manner?"

"That is a man's form, sir, on the right of the gate, trying to climb the palisades. I have had my eye on it for some time, and I feel sure of my aim."

"Hold an instant, Blodget; let us be certain before we act."

The young man lowered the butt of his piece, waiting patiently and calmly for his superior to decide. There was a human form visible, sure enough, and it was seen slowly and cautiously rising until it reached the summit of the stockade, where it appeared to pause to reconnoitre. Whether it were a pale-face or a red-skin, it was impossible to distinguish, though the whole movement left little doubt that an assailant or a spy was attempting to pass the outer defenses.

"We cannot spare that fellow," said the captain, with a little regret in his manner; "it is more than we can afford. You must bring him down, Blodget. The instant you have fired, come to the other end of the stage, where we will watch the result."

This arranged, the captain prudently passed away from the spot, turning to note the proceedings of his companion, the moment he was at the opposite angle of the gallery. Blodget was in no haste. He waited until his aim was certain; then the stillness of the valley was rudely broken by the sharp report of a rifle, and a flash illumined its obscurity. The figure fell outward, like a bird shot from its perch, lying in a ball at the foot of the stockade. Still, no cry or groan gave evidence of nature surprised by keen and unexpected anguish. At the next instant Blodget was by Captain Willoughby's side. His conduct was a pledge of fidelity that could not be mistaken, and a warm squeeze of the hand assured the youth of his superior's approbation.

It was necessary to be cautious, however, and to watch the result with ceaseless vigilance. Joyce and the men below had taken the alarm, and the sergeant and his companions were ordered up on the stage immediately, leaving

the negro, alone, to watch the gate. A message was also sent to the females to give them confidence, and particularly to direct the blacks to arm, and to repair to the loops.

All this was done without confusion, and with so little noise as to prevent those without from understanding what was in progress. Terror kept the negroes silent, and discipline the others. As every one had lain down in his or her clothes, it was not a minute before every being in the Hut was up and in motion. It is unnecessary to speak of the mental prayers and conflicting emotions with which Mrs. Willoughby and her daughters prepared themselves for the struggle; and yet even the beautiful and delicate Maud braced her nerves to meet the emergency of a frontier assault. As for Beulah, gentle, peaceful, and forgiving as she was by nature, the care of little Evert aroused all the mother within her, and something like a frown that betokened resolution was, for a novelty, seen on her usually placid face.

A moment sufficed to let Joyce and his companions into the state of affairs. There now being four armed men on the stage, one took each of the three exposed sides of the buildings to watch, leaving the master of the house to move from post to post, to listen to suggestions, hear reports, and communicate orders.

The dark object that lay at the foot of the palisades was pointed out to the sergeant the instant he was on the stage, and one of his offices was to observe it in order to ascertain if it moved, or whether any attempts were made to carry off the body. The American Indians attach all the glory or shame of a battle to the acquisition or loss of scalps, and one of their practices was to remove those who had fallen, at every hazard, in order to escape the customary mutilation. Some tribes even believed it disgrace to suffer a dead body to be struck by the enemy, and many a warrior has lost his life in the effort to save the senseless corpse of a comrade from this fancied degradation.

As soon as the little stir created in the Hut by the mustering of the men was over, a stillness as profound as that

which had preceded the alarm reigned around the place. No noise came from the direction of the mill; no cry, or call, or signal of battle was heard; everything lay in the quiet of midnight. Half an hour thus passed, when the streak of light that appeared in the east announced the approach of day.

The twenty minutes that succeeded were filled with intense anxiety. The slow approach of light gradually brought out object after object in the little panorama, awakening and removing alike conjectures and apprehensions. At first the gray of the palisades became visible; then the chapel, in its sombre outlines; the skirts of the woods; the different cabins that lined them; the cattle in the fields, and the scattering trees. As for Joyce, he kept his gaze fastened on the object at the foot of the stockade, expecting every instant there would be an attempt to carry it off.

At length, the light became so strong as to allow the eye to take in the entire surface of the natural glacis without the defenses, bringing the assurance that no enemy was near. As the ground was perfectly clear, a few fruit-trees and shrubs on the lawn excepted, and by changing positions on the stage, these last could now be examined on all sides, nothing was easier than to make certain of this fact. The fences, too, were light and open, rendering it impossible for any ambush or advancing party to shelter itself behind them. In a word, daylight brought the comfortable assurance to those within the palisades that another night was passed without bringing an assault.

"We shall escape this morning, I do believe, Joyce," said the captain, who had laid down his rifle, and no longer felt it necessary to keep the upper portions of his body concealed behind the roof; "nothing can be seen that denotes an intention to attack, and not an enemy is near."

"I will take one more thorough look, your honor," answered the sergeant, mounting to the ridge of the building, where he obtained the immaterial advantage of seeing more at the same time, at the risk of exposing his whole person, should any hostile rifle be in reach of a bullet, "then we may be certain."

Joyce was a man who stood just six feet in his stockings; and, losing no part of this stature by his setting up, a better object for a sharpshooter could not have been presented than he now offered. The crack of a rifle soon saluted the ears of the garrison; then followed the whizzing of the bullet as it came humming through the air towards the Hut. But the report was so distant as at once to announce that the piece was discharged from the margin of the forest; a certain evidence of two important facts; one, that the enemy had fallen back to a cover; the other, that the house was narrowly watched.

Nothing tries the nerves of a young soldier more than the whizzing of a distant fire. The slower a bullet or a shot approaches, the more noise it makes; and, the sound continuing longer than is generally supposed, the uninitiated are apt to imagine that the dangerous missile is travelling on an errand directly towards themselves. Space appears annihilated, and raw hands are often seen to duck at a round shot that is possibly flying a hundred yards from them.

On the present occasion, the younger Pliny fairly squatted below the roof; Jamie thought it prudent to put some of his own masonry, which was favorably placed in an adjacent chimney for such a purpose, between him and the spot whence the report proceeded; while even Blodget looked up into the air, as if he expected to see where the bullet was going. Captain Willoughby had no thought of the missile; he was looking for the smoke in the skirts of the woods, to note the spot; while Joyce, with folded arms, stood at rest on the ridge, actually examining the valley in another direction, certain that a fire so distant could not be very dangerous.

Jamie's calculation proved a good one. The bullet struck against the chimney, indented a brick, and fell upon the shingles of the roof. Joyce descended at the next instant, and he coolly picked up, and kept tossing the flattened bit of lead in his hand, for the next minute or two, with the air of a man who seemed unconscious of having it at all.

"The enemy is besieging us, your honor," said Joyce "but he will not attack at present. If I might presume to advise, we shall do well to leave a single sentinel on this stage, since no one can approach the palisades without being seen, if the man keeps in motion."

"I was thinking of this myself, sergeant; we will first post Blodget here. We can trust him; and as the day advances, a less intelligent sentinel will answer. At the same time, he must be instructed to keep an eye in the rear of the Hut, danger often coming from the quarter least expected."

All this was done, and the remainder of the men descended to the court. Captain Willoughby ordered the gate unbarred, when he passed outside, taking the direction towards the lifeless body, which still lay where it had fallen, at the foot of the stockades. He was accompanied by Joyce and Jamie Allen, the latter carrying a spade, it being the intention to inter the savage as the shortest means of getting rid of a disagreeable object. Our two old soldiers had none of the sensitiveness on the subject of exposure that is so apt to disturb the tyro in the art of war. With sentinels properly posted, they had no apprehensions of dangers that did not exist, and they moved with confidence and steadily wherever duty called. Not only was the inner gate opened and passed, but the outer also, the simple precaution of stationing a man at the first being the only safeguard taken.

When outside of the palisades, the captain and his companions proceeded at once towards the body. It was now sunrise, and a rich light was illuminating the hill-tops, though the direct rays of the luminary had not yet descended to the valley. There lay the Indian, precisely as he had fallen, no warrior having interposed to save him from the scalping-knife. His head had reached the earth first, and the legs and body were tumbled on it, in a manner to render the form a confused pile of legs and blanket, rather than a bold savage stretched in the repose of death.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed the captain, as the three ap-

proached the spot; "it is to be hoped Blodget's bullet did its commission faithfully, else the fall must have hurt him sadly."

"By Jove, 'tis nothing but a stuffed soldier!" cried Joyce, rolling the ingeniously contrived bundle over with his foot; "and here the lad's ball has passed directly through its head! This is Injin deviltry, sir; it has been tried in order to see whether our sentinels were or were not asleep."

"To me, Joyce, it seems more like a white man's clumsiness. The fellow has been made to resemble an Indian, but people of our own color have had a hand in the affair."

"Well, sir, let that be as it may, it is lucky our youngster had so quick an eye, and so nimble a finger. See your honor; here is the pole by which the effigy was raised to the top of the palisades, and here is the trail on the grass yet, by which his supporter has crept off. The fellow seems to have scrambled along in a hurry; his trail is as plain as that of a whole company."

The captain examined the marks left on the grass, and was of opinion that more than one man had been employed to set up the decoy figure, a circumstance that seemed probable in itself when the weight of the image and the danger of exposure were remembered. Let that be as it might, he was rejoiced, on reflection, that no one was hurt, and he still retained the hope of being able to come to such an understanding with his invaders as to supersede the necessity of actual violence.

"At all events, your honor, I will carry the quaker in," said Joyce, tossing the stuffed figure on a shoulder. "He will do to man the quaker gun at least, and may be of use in frightening some one of the other side more than he has yet frightened us."

Captain Willoughby did not object, though he reminded Joyce that the desertions had probably put the enemy in possession of a minute statement of their defenses and force, including the history of the wooden gun. If Joe and his fellow-delinquents had joined the party at the mill

the name, age, character, and spirit of every man remaining in the garrison were probably known to its leaders; and neither quakers nor paddies would count for much in opposing an assault.

The captain came within the gate of the palisades last, closing, barring, and locking it with his own hands, when all immediate apprehensions from the enemy ceased. He knew, certainly, that it would probably exceed his present means of resistance to withstand a vigorous assault; but, on the other hand, he felt assured that Indians would never approach a stockade in open day, and expose themselves to the hazards of losing some fifteen or twenty of their number before they could carry the place. This was opposed to all their notions of war, neither honor nor advantage tempting them to adopt it. As for the first, agreeably to savage notions, glory was to be measured by the number of scalps taken and lost; and, counting all the women left in the Hut, there would not be heads enough to supply a sufficient number to prove an offset to those which would probably be lost in the assault.

All this did the captain discuss in few words with the sergeant, when he proceeded to join his anxious and expecting wife and daughters.

"God has looked down upon us in mercy, and protected us this night," said the grateful Mrs. Willoughby, with streaming eyes, as she received and returned her husband's warm embrace. "We cannot be too thankful when we look at these dear girls, and our precious little Evert. If Robert were only with us now, I should be entirely happy!"

"Such is human nature, my little Maud," answered the captain, drawing his darling towards himself and kissing her polished forehead. "The very thoughts of being in our actual strait would have made your mother as miserable as her worst enemy could wish — if, indeed, there be such a monster on earth as her enemy — and now she protests she is delighted because our throats were not all cut last night. We are safe enough for the day, I think, and not another night shall one of you pass in the Hut, if I can

have my way. If there be such a thing as desertion, there is such a thing as evacuation also."

"Hugh! What can you — do you mean! Remember, we are surrounded by a wilderness."

"I know our position reasonably well, wife of mine, and I intend to turn that knowledge to some account, God willing and aiding. I mean to place old Hugh Willoughby by the side of Xenophon and Washington, and let the world see what a man is capable of on a retreat, when he has such a wife, two such daughters, and a grandson like that, on his hands. As for Bob, I would not have him here, on any account. The young dog would run away with half the glory."

The ladies were too delighted to find their father and husband in such spirits to be critical, and all soon after sat down to an early breakfast, to eat with what appetite they could.

CHAPTER XXII.

Yet I well remember
The favors of these men: were they not mine?
Did they not sometimes cry, All hail! to me?
So Judas did to Christ: but He, in twelve
Found truth in all but one: I in twelve thousand none.
RICHARD II.

THAT which Captain Willoughby had said in seeming pleasantry, he seriously meditated. The idea of passing another night in the Hut, supported by only six men, with more than ten times that number besieging him, and with all the secrets of his defenses known, through the disaffection of his retainers, was to the last degree painful to him. Had his own life alone been at risk, military pride might have tempted him to remain; but his charge was far too precious to be exposed on account of considerations so vain.

No sooner, therefore, was the breakfast over, than the captain summoned Joyce to a consultation on the contemplated movement. The interview took place in the library, whither the sergeant repaired, on receiving his superior's orders. As to the party without, no apprehension was felt, so long as the sentinels were even moderately vigilant, and the day lasted.

"I suppose, sergeant," commenced Captain Willoughby, "a soldier of your experience is not to be taught what is the next resort of a commanding officer when he finds himself unable to make good his ground against his enemy in front?"

"It is to retreat, your honor. The road that cannot be passed must be turned."

"You have judged rightly. It is now my intention to evacuate the Hut, and to try our luck on a march to the

rear. A retreat, skillfully executed, is a creditable thing; and any step appears preferable to exposing the dear beings in the other room to the dangers of a night assault."

Joyce appeared struck with the suggestion; though, if one might have judged from the expression of his countenance, far from favorably. He reflected a moment ere he answered.

"Did your honor send for me," he then inquired, "to issue orders for this retreat, or was it your pleasure to hear anything I might have to say about it?"

"The last — I shall give no orders, until I know your opinion of the measure."

"It is as much the duty of an inferior to speak his mind freely when he is called for an opinion, Captain Willoughby, as it is to obey in silence, when he gets nothing but orders. According to my views of the matter we shall do better to stand our ground, and try to make good the house against these vagabonds, than to trust to the woods."

"Of course you have your reasons for this opinion, Joyce?"

"Certainly, your honor. In the first place, I suppose it to be against the rules of the art of war to evacuate a place that is well provisioned, without standing an assault. This we have not yet done. It is true, sir, that our ranks are thinned by desertions; but I never heard of a garrisoned town or a garrisoned house, capitulating on account of a few deserters; and I take it, evacuation is only the next step before capitulation."

"But our desertions, Joyce, have not been few but many. Three times as many have left us, if we include our other losses. as remain. It matters not whence the loss proceeds, so long as it is a loss."

"A retreat, with women and baggage, is always a ticklish operation, your honor, especially if an enemy is pressing your rear! Then we have a wilderness before us, and the ladies could hardly hold out for so long a march as that from this place to the Mohawk; short of which

river they will hardly be as safe as they are at present."

"I have had no such march in view, Joyce. You know there is a comfortable hut, only a mile from this very spot, on the mountain-side, where we commenced a clearing for a sheep-pasture only three summers since. The field is in rich grass; and could we once reach the cabin and manage to drive a cow or two up there, we might remain a month in security. As for provisions and clothes, we could carry enough on our backs to serve us all several weeks, especially if assisted by the cows."

"I'm glad your honor has thought of this idea," said the sergeant, his face brightening as he listened; "it will be a beautiful operation to fall back on that position, when we can hold out no longer in this. The want of some such arrangement has been my only objection to this post, Captain Willoughby; for we have always seemed to me, out here in the wilderness, like a regiment drawn up with a ravine or a swamp in its rear."

"I am glad to find you relishing the movement for any cause, sergeant. It is my intention at present to make the necessary arrangements to evacuate the Hut, while it is light; and as soon as it is dark to retreat by the gates, the palisades, and the rivulet — How now, Jamie? You look as if there were news to communicate?"

Jamie Allen, in truth, had entered at that instant in so much haste as to have overlooked the customary ceremony of sending in his name, or even of knocking.

"News!" repeated the mason, with a sort of wondering smile, "and it's just that I've come to bring. Wad ye think it, baith, gentlemen, that our people are in their ain cabins ag'in, boiling their pots, and frying their pork, a' the same as if the valley was in a state of tranquillity, and we so many lairds waiting for them to come and do our pleasure!"

"I do not understand you, Jamie — whom do you mean by 'our people'?"

"Sure, just the desairters; Joel, and the miller, and Michael, and the rest."

"And the cabins — and the pots — and the pork — it is gibberish to me."

"I hae what ye English ca' an aiccent, I know; but, in my judgment, Captain Willoughby, the words may be comprehended without a dictionary. It's just that Joel Strides, and Daniel the miller, and the rest o' them that fleed the past night, have gane into their ain abodes, and have lighted their fires, and put over their pots and kettles, and set up their domestic habitudes, a' the same as if this Beaver Dam was ain o' the pairks o' Lonnon!"

"The devil they have! Should this be the case, sergeant, our sortie may be made at an earlier hour than that mentioned. I never will submit to such an insult."

Captain Willoughby was too much aroused to waste many words, and seizing his hat he proceeded forthwith to take a look for himself. The stage or gallery on the roofs offering the best view, in a minute he and his two companions were on it.

"There; ye'll be seein' a smoke in Joel's habitation with your own een; and yon is anither, in the dwelling of his cousin Seth," said Jamie, pointing in the direction he named.

"Smoke there is, of a certainty; but the Indians may have lighted fires in the kitchen to do their own cooking. This looks like investing us, sergeant, rather more closely than the fellows have done before."

"I rather think not, your honor — Jamie is right, or my eyes do not know a man from a woman. That is certainly a female in the garden of Joel, and I'll engage it's Phœbe, pulling onions for his craving stomach, the scoundrel!"

Captain Willoughby never moved without his little glass, and it was soon leveled at the object mentioned.

"By Jupiter, you are right, Joyce," he cried. "It is Phœbe, though the hussy is coolly weeding, not culling the onions! Aye, and now I see Joel himself! The rascal is examining some hoes, with as much philosophy as if he were master of them, and all near them. This is a most singular situation to be in!"

This last remark was altogether just. The situation of those in the Hut was now singular indeed. Further examination showed that every cabin had its tenant, no one of the party that remained within the palisades being a householder. By using the glass, and pointing it, in succession, at the different dwellings, the captain in due time detected the presence of nearly every one of the deserters. Not a man of them all, in fact, was missing, Mike alone excepted. There they were, with their wives and children, in quiet possession of their different habitations. Nor was this all; the business of the valley seemed as much on their minds as had been their practice for years. Cows were milked, the swine were fed, poultry was called and cared for, and each household was also making the customary preparations for the morning meal.

So absorbed was the captain with this extraordinary scene that he remained an hour on the staging watching the course of events. The breakfasts were soon over, having been later than common, and a little hurried; then commenced the more important occupations of the day. A field was already half ploughed, in preparation for a crop of winter grain; thither Joel himself proceeded, with the necessary cattle, accompanied by the laborers who usually aided him in that particular branch of husbandry. Three ploughs were soon at work, with as much regularity and order as if nothing had occurred to disturb the tranquillity of the valley. The axes of the wood-choppers were next heard, coming out of the forest, cutting fuel for the approaching winter; and a half-finished ditch had its workmen also, who were soon busy casting up the soil, and fashioning their trench. In a word, all the suspended toil was renewed with perfect system and order.

"This beats the devil himself, Joyce!" said the captain, after a half hour of total silence. "Here are all these fellows at work as coolly as if I had just given them their tasks, and twice as diligently. Their unusual industry is a bad symptom of itself!"

"Your honor will remark one circumstance. Not a rascal of them all comes within the fair range of a mus-

ket; for, as to throwing away ammunition at such distances, it would be clearly unmilitary, and might be altogether useless."

"I have half a mind to scatter them with a volley," said the captain, doubtingly. "Bullets would take effect among those ploughmen, could they only be made to hit."

"And amang the cattle, too," observed the Scotsman, who had an eye on the more economical part of the movement, as well as on that which was military. "A ball would slay a horse as well as a man in such a skairmish."

"This is true enough, Jamie; and it is not exactly the sort of warfare I could wish, to be firing at men who were so lately my friends. I do not see, Joyce, that the rascals have any arms with them?"

"Not a musket, sir. I noticed that when Joel first detailed his detachments. Can it be possible that the savages have retired?"

"Not they, else would Mr. Strides and his friends have gone with them. No, sergeant, there is a deep plan to lead us into some sort of ambush in this affair, and we will be on the lookout for them."

Joyce stood contemplating the scene for some time in profound silence, when he approached the captain formally, and made the usual military salute; a ceremony he had punctiliously observed, on all proper occasions, since the garrison might be said to be placed under martial law.

"If it's your honor's pleasure," he said, "I will detail a detachment, and go out and bring in two or three of these deserters; by which means we shall get into their secrets."

"A detachment, Joyce!" answered the captain, eying his subordinate a little curiously. "What troops do you propose to tell off for the service?"

"Why, your honor, there's Corporal Allen and old Pliny off duty; I think the thing might be done with them, if your honor would have the condescension to order Corporal Blodget, with the two other blacks, to form as a supporting party, under the cover of one of the fences."

"A disposition of my force that would leave Captain Willoughby for a garrison! I thank you, sergeant, for your offer and gallantry, but prudence will not permit it. We may set down Strides and his companions as so many knaves, and" —

"That may ye!" cried Mike's well-known voice, from the scuttle that opened into the garrets, directly in front of which the two old soldiers were conversing; "that may ye, and no har-r-m done the trut', or justice, or for that matther, meself. Och! if I had me will of the blackguards, every rogue of 'em should be bound hand and fut and laid under that pratthy wather-fall, yon at the mill, until his sins was washed out of him. Would there be confessions, then? That would there; and sich letting out of sacrets as would satisfy the conscience of a hog!"

By the time Mike had got through this sentiment he was on the staging, where he stood hitching up his nether garment, with a meaning grin on his face that gave a peculiar expression of heavy cunning to the massive jaw and capacious mouth, blended with an honesty and good-nature that the well-meaning fellow was seldom without when he addressed any of the captain's family. Joyce glanced at the captain, expecting orders to seize the returned runaway, but his superior read at once good faith in the expression of his old retainer's countenance.

"You have occasioned us a good deal of surprise, O'Hearn, on more accounts than one," observed the captain, who thought it prudent to assume more sternness of manner than his feelings might have actually warranted. "You have not only gone off yourself, but you have suffered your prisoner to escape with you. Then your manner of getting into the house requires an explanation. I shall hear what you have to say before I make up my mind as to your conduct."

"Is it spake I will? That will I, and as long as it plases yer honor to listen. Och! Isn't that Saucy Nick a quare one? Divil burn me if I thinks the likes of him is to be found in all Ameriky, full as it is of Injins and saucy fellies! Well, now, I suppose, sargeant, ye've set me down as sthrid-

ing off with Misther Joel and his likes, if ye was to open yer heart, and spake yer thrue mind!"

"You have been marked for a deserter, O'Hearn, and one, too, that deserted from post."

"Post! Had I been that I shouldn't have stirred, and ye'd be wanting in the news I bring ye from the majjor, and Mr. Woods, and the savages, and the rest of the varmints."

"My son! Is this possible, Michael? Have you seen him, or can you tell us anything of his state?"

Mike now assumed a manner of mysterious importance, laying a finger on his nose, and pointing towards the sentinel and Jamie.

"It's the sargeant that I considers as one of the family," said the county Leitrim-man, when his pantomime was through, "but it isn't dacent to be bawling out sacrets through a whole neighborhood; and then, as for Ould Nick — or Saucy Nick, or whatever ye calls him — och! isn't he a pratthy Injin! Ye'll mar-r-ch t'rough Ameriky, and never see his aiquel!"

"This will never do, O'Hearn. Whatever you have to say must be said clearly, and in the simplest manner, Follow to the library, where I will hear your report. Joyce, you will accompany us."

"Let him come, if he wishes to hear wonderful achaivements!" answered Mike, making way for the captain to descend the steps; then following himself, talking as he went. "He'll niver brag of his campaigns ag'in to the likes of me, seeing that I've outdone him, ten — aye, forty times, and boot. Och! that Nick's a divil, and no har-r-m said!"

"In the first place, O'Hearn," resumed the captain, as soon as the three were alone in the library, "you must explain your own desertion."

"Me! Desart! Sure, it isn't run away from yer honor, and the missus, and Miss Beuly, and pratthy Miss Maud, and the child, that yer honor's m'aning?"

This was said with so much nature and truth, that the captain had not the heart to repeat the question, though Joyce's more drilled feelings were less moved. The first

even felt a tear springing to his eye, and he no longer distrusted the Irishman's fidelity, unaccountable as his conduct did and must seem to his cooler judgment. But Mike's sensitiveness had taken the alarm, and it was only to be appeased by explanations.

"Yer honor's not sp'aking when I questions ye on that same?" he resumed, doubtingly.

"Why, Mike, to be sincere, it did look a little suspicious when you not only went off yourself, but you let the Indian go off with you."

"Did it?" said Mike, musing; "no, I don't allow that, seein' that the intent and object was good. And then I never took the Injin wid me; but 'twas I, meself, that went wid him."

"I rather think, your honor," said Joyce, smiling, "we'll put O'Hearn's name in its old place on the roster, and make no mark against him at pay-day."

"I think it will turn out so, Joyce. We must have patience, too, and let Mike tell his story in his own way."

"Is it tell a story, will I? Ah! Nick's the cr'ature for that same! See, he has given me foor bits of sticks, every one of which is to tell a story, in its own way. This is the first; and it manes let the captain into the sacret of your retrait; and how you got out of the windie, and how you comes near to breaking yer neck by a fall because of the fut's slipping; and how ye wint down the roof by a rope, the divil a bit fastening it to your neck, but houlding it in yer hand with such a grip as if 'twere the fait' of the Church itself; and how Nick led ye to the hole out of which ye bot' wint, as if ye had been two cats going t'rough a door."

Mike stopped to grin and look wise, as he recounted the manner of the escape, the outlines of which, however, were sufficiently well known to his auditors before he began.

"Throw away that stick, now, and let us know where this hole is, and what you mean by it."

"No," answered Mike, looking at the stick, in a doubting manner, "I'll not t'row it away, wid yer honor's l'ave,

'till I've tould ye how we got into the brook, forenent the forest, and waded up to the woods, where we was all the same as if we had been two bits of clover tops hid in a haymow. That Nick is a cr'ature at consailment!"

"Go on," said the captain, patiently, knowing that there was no use in hurrying one of Mike's peculiar mode of communicating his thoughts. "What came next?"

"That will I; and the r'ason comes next, as is seen by this oder stick. And so, Nick and myself was in the chaplain's room all alone, and n'ither of us had any mind to dhrink; Nick becase he was a prisoner and felt crass, and full of dignity like; and meself because I was a sentinel; and Sargeant Joyce, there, had tould me, the Lord knows how often, that if I did my duty well, I might come to be a corporal, which was next in rank to himself; barring, too, that I was a sentinel, and a drunken sentinel is a disgrace to man, sowl and body, and musket."

"And so neither of you drank?" put in the captain, by way of a reminder.

"For that same r'ason, and one betther still, as we had nothin' to dhrink. Well, says Nick, 'Mike,' says he, 'you like cap'in, and missus, and Miss Beuly, and Miss Maud, and the babby?' 'Divil burn ye, Nick,' says I, 'why do ye ask so foolish a question? Is it likes ye would know? Well — then just ask yerself if ye likes yer own kith and kin, and ye've got yer answer.'"

"And Nick made his proposal, on getting this answer," interrupted the captain, "which was" —

"Here it is, on the stick. 'Well,' says Nick, says he — 'run away wid Nick, and see majjor; bring back news. Nick cap'in friend, but cap'in don't know it — won't believe' — fait', I can't tell yer honor all Nick said, in his own manner; and so, wid yer l'ave, I'll just tell it in my own way."

"Any way, Mike, so that you do but tell it."

"Nick's a cr'ature! His idee was for us two to get out of the windie, and up on the platform, and to take the bedcord, and other things, and slide down upon the ground — and we did it! As sure as your honor and the sargeant is

there, we did that same, and no bones broke! 'Well,' says I, 'Nick, ye're here, sure enough, but how do you mane to get out of here? Is it climb the palisades ye will, and be shot by a sentinel?' — if there was one, which there wasn't, yer honor, seeing that all had run away — 'or do ye mane to stay here,' says I, 'and be taken a prisoner of war ag'in, in which case ye'll be two prisoners, seein' that ye've been taken wonst already, will ye, Nick?' says I. So Nick never spoke, but he held up his finger, and made a sign for me to follow, as follow I did; and we just crept through the palisade, and a mighty pratthy walk we had of it, alang the meadies, and t'rough the lanes, the rest of the way."

"You crept through the palisades, Mike! There is no outlet of sufficient size."

"I admits the hole is a tight squaze, but 'twill answer. And then it's just as good for an inlet as it is for an outlet, seein' that I came t'rough it this very marnin'. Och! Nick's a cr'ature! And how d'ye think that hole comes there, barring all oversights in setting up the sticks?"

"It has not been made intentionally, I should hope, O'Hearn?"

"'Twas made by Joel, and that by just sawing off a post, and forcin' out a pin or two, so that the palisade works like a door. Och! it's nately contrived, and it manes mischief."

"This must be looked to at once," cried the captain; "lead the way, Mike, and show us the spot."

As the Irishman was nothing loth, all three were soon in the court, whence Mike led the way through the gate, round to the point where the stockade came near the cliffs, on the eastern side of the buildings. This was the spot where the path that led down to the spring swept along the defenses, and was on the very route by which the captain contemplated retreating, as well as on that by which Maud had entered the Hut, the night of the invasion. At a convenient place a palisade had been sawed off, so low in the ground that the sods, which had been cut and were movable, concealed the injury, while the heads of the pins that ought to have bound the timber to the cross-piece. were in their holes,

leaving everything apparently secure. On removing the sods, and pushing the timber aside, the captain ascertained that a man might easily pass without the stockade. As this corner was the most retired within the works, there was no longer any doubt that the hole had been used by all the deserters, including the women and children. In what manner it became known to Nick, however, still remained matter of conjecture.

Orders were about to be given to secure this passage, when it occurred to the captain it might possibly be of use in effecting his own retreat. With this object in view, then, he hastened away from the place, lest any wandering eye without might detect his presence near it, and conjecture the cause. On returning to the library, the examination of Mike was resumed.

As the reader must be greatly puzzled with the county Leitrim-man's manner of expressing himself, we shall relate the substance of what he now uttered, for the sake of brevity. It would seem that Nick had succeeded in persuading Mike, first, that he, the Tuscarora, was a fast friend of the captain and his family, confined by the former, in consequence of a misconception of the real state of the Indian's feelings, much to the detriment of all their interests; and that no better service could be rendered the Willoughbys than to let Nick depart, and for the Irishman to go with him. Mike, however, had not the slightest idea of desertion, the motive which prevailed on him to quit the Hut being a desire to see the major, and, if possible, to help him escape. As soon as this expectation was placed before his eyes, Mike became a convert to the Indian's wishes. Like all exceedingly zealous men, the Irishman had an itching propensity to be doing, and he was filled with a sort of boyish delight at the prospect of effecting a great service to those whom he so well loved, without their knowing it. Such was the history of Michael's seeming desertion; that of what occurred after he quitted the works remains to be related.

The Tuscarora led his companion out of the Hut, within half an hour after they had been left alone together in the

room of Mr. Woods. As this was subsequently to Joel's flight, Nick, in anticipation of this event, chose to lie in ambush a short time, in order to ascertain whether the defection was likely to go any further. Satisfied on this head, he quietly retired towards the mill. After making a sufficient *détour* to avoid being seen from the house, Nick gave himself no trouble about getting into the woods, or practicing any of the expedients of a time of real danger, as had been done by all of the deserters; but he walked leisurely across the meadows until he struck the highway, along which he proceeded forthwith to the rocks. All this was done in a way that showed that he felt himself at home, and that he had no apprehensions of falling into an ambush. It might have arisen from his familiarity with the ground; or it might have proceeded from the consciousness that he was approaching friends instead of enemies.

At the rocks, however, Nick did not deem it wise to lead Mike any further, without some preliminary caution. The white man was concealed in one of the clefts, therefore, while the Indian pursued his way alone. The latter was absent an hour; at the end of that time he returned, and after giving Mike a great many cautions about silence and prudence, he led him to the cabin of the miller, in the buttery of which Robert Willoughby was confined. To this buttery there was a window, but as it was so small as to prevent escape, no sentinel had been placed on the outside of the building. For his own comfort, too, and in order to possess his narrow lodgings to himself, the major had given a species of parole, by which he was bound to remain in duresse until the rising of the next sun. Owing to these two causes Nick had been enabled to approach the window, and to hold communications with the prisoner. This achieved, he returned to the rocks, and led Mike to the same spot.

Major Willoughby had not been able to write much, in consequence of the darkness. That which he communicated accordingly had to pass through the fiery ordeal of the Irishman's brains. As a matter of course, it did not come with particular lucidity, though Mike did succeed in making his auditors comprehend this much.

The major was substantially well treated, though intimations had been given that he would be considered as a spy. Escape seemed next to impossible, still he should not easily abandon the hope. From all he had seen, the party was one of that irresponsible character that would render capitulation exceedingly hazardous, and he advised his father to hold out to the last. In a military point of view he considered his captors as contemptible, being without a head, though many of the men, the savages in particular, appeared to be ferocious and reckless. The whole party was guarded in discourse, and little was said in English, though he was convinced that many more whites were present than he had at first believed. Mr. Woods he had not seen, nor did he know anything of his arrest or detention.

This much Mike succeeded in making the captain comprehend, though a great deal was lost through the singular confusion that prevailed in the mind of the messenger. Mike, however, had still another communication, which we reserve for the ears of the person to whom it was especially sent.

This news produced a pause in Captain Willoughby's determination. Some of the fire of youth awoke within him, and he debated with himself on the possibility of making a sortie, and of liberating his son, as a step preliminary to victory, or at least to a successful retreat. Acquainted with every foot of the ground, which had singular facilities for a step so bold, the project found favor in his eyes each minute, and soon became fixed

CHAPTER XXIII.

Another love
In its lone woof began to twine;
But, ah! the golden thread was wove
That bound my sister's heart in mine!

WILLIS.

WHILE the captain and Joyce were digesting their plans, Mike proceeded on an errand of peculiar delicacy with which he had been intrusted by Robert Willoughby. The report that he had returned flew through the dwellings, and many were the hearty greetings and shakings of the hand that the honest fellow had to undergo from the Plinies and Smashes, ere he was at liberty to set about the execution of this trust. The wenches, in particular, having ascertained that Mike had not broken his fast, insisted on his having a comfortable meal, in a sort of servants' hall, before they would consent to his quitting their sight. As the county Leitrim-man was singularly ready with a knife and fork, he made no very determined opposition, and in a few minutes he was hard at work, discussing a cold ham, with the other collaterals of a substantial American breakfast.

The blacks, the Smashes inclusive, had been seriously alarmed at the appearance of the invading party. Between them and the whole family of red-men there existed a sort of innate dislike, an antipathy that originated in color, and woo.., and habits, and was in no degree lessened by apprehensions on the score of scalps.

"How you look, ole Plin, widout wool?" Big Smash had reproachfully remarked, not five minutes before Mike made his appearance in the kitchen, in answer to some apologetic observation of her husband, as to the intentions of the savages being less hostile than he had at first imagined; "why you say dey no murder, and steal, and set fire,

when you know dey's Injin! Natur' be natur', and dat I hear Dominie Woods say t'ree time one Sunday. What 'e dominie say often he mean, and dere no use in saying dey don't come to do harm."

As Great Smash was an oracle in her own set, there was no gainsaying her dogmas, and Pliny the elder was obliged to succumb. But the presence of Mike, one who was understood to have been out, near, if not actually in, the enemy's camp, and a great favorite into the bargain, was a circumstance likely to revive the discourse. In fact, all the negroes crowded into the hall as soon as the Irishman was seated at table, one or two eager to talk, the rest as eager to listen.

"How near you been to sabbage, Michael?" demanded Big Smash, her two large, coal-black eyes seeming to open in a degree proportioned to her interest in the answer.

"I wint as nigh as there was occasion, Smash, and that was nigher than the likes of yer husband there would be thinking of travelling. Maybe 'twas as far as from my plate here to yon door — maybe not quite so far. They're a dhirty set, and I wish to go no nearer."

"What dey look like, in 'e dark?" inquired Little Smash; "awful as by daylight?"

"It's not meself that stopped to admire 'em. Nick and I had our business forenent us, and when a man is hurried it isn't r'asonable to suppose he can kape turning his head about to see sights."

"What dey do wid Misser Woods? What sabbage want wid dominie?"

"Sure enough, little one; and the question is of yer own asking. A praist, even though he should be only a heretic, can have no great call for his sarvices in sich a congregation. And I don't think the fellows are blackguards enough to scalp a parson."

Then followed a flood of incoherent questions that were put by all the blacks in a body, accompanied by divers looks ominous of the most serious disasters, blended with bursts of laughter, that broke out of their risible natures in a way to render the medley of sensations as ludicrous as it

was strange. Mike soon found answering a task too difficult to be attempted, and he philosophically came to a determination to confine his efforts to masticating.

Notwithstanding the terror that actually prevailed among the blacks, it was not altogether unmixed with a resolution to die with arms in their hands, in preference to yielding to savage clemency. Hatred, in a measure, supplied the place of courage, though both sexes had insensibly imbibed some of that resolution which is the result of habit, and of which a border life is certain to instill more or less into its subjects, in a form suited to border emergencies. Nor was this feeling confined to the men; the two Smashes, in particular, being women capable of achieving acts that would be thought heroic under circumstances likely to arouse their feelings.

"Now, Smashes," said Mike, when by his own calculation he had about three minutes to the termination of his breakfast before him, "ye'll do what I tells ye, and no questions asked. Ye'll find the laddies, missus, and Miss Beuly, and Miss Maud, and ye'll give my humble respects to 'em all — divil the bit, now, will ye be overlooking either of the t'ree, but ye'll do yer errand genteelly and like a laddy yerself — and ye'll give my jewty and respects to 'em all, I tells ye, and say that Michael O'Hearn asks the honor of being allowed to wish 'em good morning."

Little Smash screamed at this message, yet she went forthwith, and delivered it, making reasonably free with Michael's manner and gallantry in so doing.

"O'Hearn has something to tell us from Robert," said Mrs. Willoughby, who had been made acquainted with the Irishman's exploits and return; "he must be suffered to come in as soon as he desires."

With this reply Little Smash terminated her mission.

"And now, laddies and gentlemen," said Mike, with gravity, as he rose to quit the servants' hall, "my blessing and good wishes be wid ye. A hearty male have I had at yer hands and yer cookery, and good thanks it desarves. As for the Injins, jist set yer hearts at rest, as not one of ye will be scalped the day, seeing that the savages are all to be forenent the mill this morning, houlding a great council,

as I knows from Nick himself. A comfortable time, then, ye may all enjoy, wid yer heads on yer shoulders, and yer wool on yer heads."

Mike's grin, as he retreated, showed that he meant to be facetious, having all the pleasantry that attends a full stomach uppermost in his animal nature at that precise moment. A shout rewarded this sally, and the parties separated with mutual good humor and good feeling. In this state of mind the county Leitrim-man was ushered into the presence of the ladies. A few words of preliminary explanations were sufficient to put Mike in the proper train, when he came at once to his subject.

"The majjor is no way down-hearted," he said, "and he ordered me to give his jewty and riverence and obligations to his honored mother and his sisters. 'Tell 'em, Mike,' says he, says the majjor, 'that I feels for 'em all the same as if I was their own fader; and tell 'em,' says he, 'to keep up their spirits, and all will come right in the ind. This is a throublesome world, but they that does their jewties to God and man, and the Church, will not fail, in the long run, to wor-r-k their way t'rough purgatory even, into paradise.'"

"Surely my son — my dear Robert — never sent us such a message as this, Michael?"

"Every syllable of it, and a quantity moor that has slipped my memory," answered the Irishman, who was inventing, but who fancied he was committing a very pious fraud. "'Twould have done the missus's heart good to have listened to the majjor, who spoke more in the character of a praist like, than in that of a souldier."

All three of the ladies looked a little abashed, though there was a gleam of humor about the mouth of Maud, that showed she was not very far from appreciating the Irishman's report at its just value. As for Mrs. Willoughby and Beulah, less acquainted with Mike's habits, they did not so readily penetrate his manner of substituting his own desultory thoughts for the ideas of others.

"As I am better acquainted with Mike's language, dear mother," whispered Maud, "perhaps it will be well if I

take him into the library and question him a little between ourselves, about what actually passed. Depend on it, I shall get the truth."

"Do, my child, for it really pains me to hear Robert so much misrepresented; and, as Evert must now begin to have ideas, I really do not like that his uncle should be so placed before the dear little fellow's mind."

Maud did not even smile at this proof of a grandmother's weakness, though she felt and saw all its absurdity Heart was ever so much uppermost with the excellent matron, that it was not easy for those she loved to regard anything but her virtues; and least of all did her daughter presume to indulge in even a thought that was ludicrous at her expense. Profiting by the assent, therefore, Maud quietly made a motion for Mike to follow, and proceeded at once to the room she had named.

Not a word was exchanged between the parties until both were in the library, when Maud carefully closed the door, her face pale as marble, and stood looking inquiringly at her companion. The reader will understand that, Mr. Woods and Joyce excepted, not a soul at the Hut, out of the limits of the Willoughby connection, knew anything of our heroine's actual relation to the captain and his family. It is true, some of the oldest of the blacks had once some vague notions on the subject; but their recollections had become obscured by time, and habit was truly second nature with all of that light-hearted race.

"That was mighty injanious of you, Miss Maud!" Mike commenced, giving one of his expressive grins again, and fairly winking. "It shows how fri'nds wants no spache but their own minds. Barrin' mistakes and crass-accidents, I'm sartain that Michael O'Hearn can make himself understood any day by Miss Maud Willoughby, an' niver a word said."

"Your success then, Mike, will be greater at dumb-show than it always is with your tongue," answered the young lady, the blood slowly returning to her cheek, the accidental use of the name of Willoughby removing the apprehension of anything immediately embarrassing;

"what have you to tell me that you suppose I have anticipated?"

"Sure, the like o' yees needn't be tould, Miss Maud, that the majjor bade me spake to ye by yerself, and say a word that was not to be overheerd by any one else."

"This is singular — extraordinary even; but let me know more, though the messenger be altogether so much out of the common way!"

"I t'ought ye'd say that, when ye come to know me. Is it meself that's a messenger? and where is there another that can carry news widout spilling any by the way? Nick's a cr'ature, I allows; but the majjor know'd a million times betther than to trust an Injin wid sich a jewty. As for Joel, and that set of vagabonds, we'll grind 'em all in the mill, before we've done wid 'em. Let 'em look for no favors, if they wishes no disapp'intment."

Maud sickened at the thought of having any of those sacred feelings connected with Robert Willoughby that she had so long cherished in her inmost heart, rudely probed by so unskillful a hand; though her last conversation with the young soldier had told so much, even while it left so much unsaid, that she could almost kneel and implore Mike to be explicit. The reserve of a woman, notwithstanding, taught her how to preserve her sex's decorum, and to maintain appearances.

"If Major Willoughby desired you to communicate anything to me in particular," she said, with seeming composure, "I am ready to hear it."

"Divil the word did he desire, Miss Maud, for everything was in whispers between us, but jist what I'm about to repait. And here's my stick, that Nick tould me to kape as a reminderer; it's far betther for me than a book, as I can't read a syllable. 'And now, Mike,' says the majjor, says he, 'conthrive to see pratthy Miss Maud by herself,' —

"Pretty Miss Maud!" interrupted the young lady, involuntarily.

"Och! it's meself that says that, and sure there's plenty of r'ason for it; so we'll agree it's all right and proper —

'pratthy Miss Maud by herself, letting no mortal else know what you are about.' That was the majjor's."

"It is very extraordinary! Perhaps it will be better, Michael, if you tell me nothing but what is strictly the major's. A message should be delivered as nearly like the words that were actually sent as possible."

"Wor-r-ds! And it isn't wor-r-ds at all, that I have to give ye."

"If not a message in words, in what else can it be? Not in sticks, surely."

"In that," cried Mike, exultingly, "and, I'll warrant, when the trut' comes out, that very little bit of silver will be found as good as forty Injin scalps."

Although Mike put a small silver snuff-box, that Maud at once recognized as Robert Willoughby's property, into the young lady's hand, nothing was more apparent than the circumstance that he was profoundly ignorant of the true meaning of what he was doing. The box was very beautiful, and his mother and Beulah had often laughed at the major for using an article that was then deemed *de rigueur* for a man of extreme *ton*, when all his friends knew he never touched snuff. So far from using the stimulant, indeed, he never would show how the box was opened, a secret spring existing; and he even manifested or betrayed shyness on the subject of suffering either of his sisters to search for the means of doing so.

The moment Maud saw the box, her heart beat tumultuously. She had a presentiment that her fate was about to be decided. Still, she had sufficient self-command to make an effort to learn all her companion had to communicate.

"Major Willoughby gave you this box," she said, her voice trembling in spite of herself. "Did he send any message with it? Recollect yourself; the words may be very important."

"Is it the wor-r-ds? Well, it's little of them that passed between us, barrin' that the Injins was so near by, that it was whisper we did, and not a bit else."

"Still there must have been some message."

"Ye are as wise as a sarpent, Miss Maud, as Father O'Loony used to tell us all of a Sunday! Was it wor-r-ds! 'Give that to Miss Maud,' says the majjor, says he, 'and tell her she is now misthress of my sacret."

"Did he say this, Michael? For Heaven's sake, be certain of what you tell me!"

"Irish Mike — masser want you in monstrous hurry," cried the youngest of the three black men, thrusting his glistening face in at the door, announcing the object of the intrusion, and disappearing almost in the same instant.

"Do not leave me, O'Hearn," said Maud, nearly gasping for breath, "do not leave me without an assurance there is no mistake."

"Divil bur-r-n me if I'd brought the box, or the message, or anything like it, pratthy Miss Maud, had I t'ought it would have done this har-r-m."

"Michael O'Hearn," called the sergeant from the court in his most authoritative military manner, and that on a key that would not brook denial.

Mike did not dare delay; in half a minute Maud found herself standing alone, in the centre of the library, holding the well-known snuff-box of Robert Willoughby in her little hand. The renowned caskets of Portia had scarcely excited more curiosity in their way than this little silver box of the major's had created in the mind of Maud. In addition to his playful evasions about letting her and Beulah pry into its mysteries, he had once said to herself, in a grave and feeling manner, "When you get at the contents of this box, dear girl, you will learn the great secret of my life." These words had made a deep impression at the time — it was in his visit of the past year — but they had been temporarily forgotten in the variety of events and stronger sensations that had succeeded. Mike's message, accompanied by the box itself, however, recalled them, and Maud fancied that the major, considering himself to be in some dangerous emergency, had sent her the bauble in order that she might learn what that secret was. Possibly he meant her to communicate it to others. Persons in our heroine's situation feel, more than they reason; and it is possible Maud

might have come to some other conclusion had she been at leisure, or in a state of mind to examine all the circumstances in a more logical manner.

Now she was in possession of this long-coveted box — coveted at least so far as a look into its contents was concerned — Maud not only found herself ignorant of the secret by which it was opened, but she had scruples about using the means, even had she been in possession of them. At first she thought of carrying the thing to Beulah, and of asking if she knew any way of getting at the spring; then she shrank from the exposure that might possibly attend such a step. The more she reflected, the more she felt convinced that Robert Willoughby would not have sent her that particular box, unless it were connected with herself, in some way more than common; and ever since the conversation in the painting-room she had seen glimmerings of the truth, in relation to his feelings. These glimmerings, too, had aided her in better understanding her own heart, and all her sentiments revolted at the thought of having a witness to any explanation that might relate to the subject. In every event she determined, after a few minutes of thought, not to speak of the message, or the present, to a living soul.

In this condition of mind, filled with anxiety, pleasing doubts, apprehensions, shame, and hope, all relieved, however, by the secret consciousness of perfect innocence, and motives that an angel might avow, Maud stood, in the very spot where Mike had left her, turning the box in her hands, when accidentally she touched the spring, and the lid flew open. To glance at the contents was an act so natural and involuntary as to anticipate reflection.

Nothing was visible but a piece of white paper, neatly folded, and compressed into the box in a way to fill its interior. "Bob has written," thought Maud, "yet how could he do this? He was in the dark, and had not pen or paper!" Another look rendered this conjecture still more improbable, as it showed the gilt edge of paper of the quality used for notes, an article equally unlikely to be found in the mill and in his own pocket. "Yet it must be a

note," passed through her mind, "and of course it was written before he left the Hut — quite likely before he arrived — possibly the year before when he spoke of the box as containing the evidence of the great secret of his life."

Maud now wished for Mike, incoherent, unintelligible, and blundering as he was, that she might question him still further as to the precise words of the message. "Possibly Bob did not intend me to open the box at all," she thought, "and meant merely that I should keep it until he could return to claim it. It contains a great secret; and, because he wishes to keep this secret from the Indians, it does not follow that he intends to reveal it to me. I will shut the box again, and guard his secret as I would one of my own."

This was no sooner thought than it was done. A pressure of the lid closed it, and Maud heard the snap of the spring with a start. Scarcely was the act performed ere she repented it. "Bob would not have sent the box without some particular object," she went on to imagine; "and had he intended it not to be opened, he would have told as much to O'Hearn. How easy would it have been for him to say, and for Mike to repeat, 'Tell her to keep the box till I ask for it — it contains a secret, and I wish my captors not to learn it.' No, he has sent the box with the design that I should examine its contents. His very life may depend on my doing so; yes, and on my doing so this minute!"

This last notion no sooner glanced athwart our heroine's mind, than she began diligently to search for the hidden spring. Perhaps curiosity had its influence on the eagerness to arrive at the secret, which she now manifested; possibly a tender and still more natural feeling lay concealed behind it all. At any rate, her pretty little fingers never were employed more nimbly, and not a part of the exterior of the box escaped their pressure. Still, the secret spring eluded her search. The box had two or three bands of richly chased work on each side of the place of opening, and amid these ornaments Maud felt certain that the little pro-

jection she sought must lie concealed. To examine these, then, she commenced in a regular and connected manner resolved that not a single raised point should be neglected Accident, however, as before, stood her friend; and, at a moment when she least expected it, the lid flew back, once more exposing the paper to view.

Maud had been too seriously alarmed about re-opening the box, to hesitate a moment now, as to examining its contents. The paper was removed, and she began to unfold it slowly, a slight tremor passing through her frame as she did so. For a single instant she paused to scent the delightful and delicate perfume that seemed to render the interior sacred; then her fingers resumed their office. At each instant, her eyes expected to meet Robert Willoughby's well-known handwriting. But the folds of the paper opened on a blank. To Maud's surprise, and, for a single exquisitely painful moment, she saw that a lock of hair was all the box contained, besides the paper in which it was enveloped. Her look became anxious, and her face pale; then the eyes brightened, and a blush that might well be likened to the tints with which the approach of dawn illumines the sky, suffused her cheeks, as, holding the hair to the light, the long ringlets dropped at length, and she recognized one of those beautiful tresses, of which so many were falling at that very moment, in rich profusion around her own lovely face. To unloosen her hair from the comb, and to lay the secret of Bob Willoughby by its side, in a way to compare the glossy shades, was the act of only a moment; it sufficed, however, to bring a perfect conviction of the truth. It was a memorial of herself, then, that Robert Willoughby so prized, had so long guarded with care, and which he called the secret of his life!

It was impossible for Maud not to understand all this. Robert Willoughby loved her; he had taken this mode of telling his passion. He had been on the point of doing this in words the very day before; and now he availed himself of the only means that offered of completing the tale. A flood of tenderness gushed to the heart of Maud, as she passed over all this in her mind; and, from that moment,

she ceased to feel shame at the recollection of her own attachment. She might still have shrunk a little from avowing it to her father and mother, and Beulah; but, as to herself, the world, and the object of her affections, she now stood perfectly vindicated in her own eyes.

That was a precious half hour which succeeded. For the moment, all present dangers were lost sight of, in the glow of future hopes. Maud's imagination portrayed scenes of happiness, in which domestic duties, Bob beloved, almost worshipped, and her father and mother happy in the felicity of their children, were the prominent features; while Beulah and little Evert filled the background of the picture in colors of pleasing softness. But these were illusions that could not last forever, the fearful realities of her situation returning with the greater consciousness of existence. Still, Bob might now be loved, without wounding any of the sensitiveness of her sex's opinions; and dearly, engrossingly, passionately was he rewarded, for the manner in which he had thought of letting her know the true state of his heart, at a moment when he had so much reason to think only of himself.

It was time for Maud to return to her mother and sister. The box was carefully concealed, leaving the hair in its old envelope, and she hurried to the nursery. On entering the room, she found that her father had just preceded her. The captain was grave, more thoughtful than usual, and his wife, accustomed to study his countenance for so much of her happiness, saw at once that something lay heavy on his mind.

"Has anything out of the way happened, Hugh," she asked, "to give you uneasiness?"

Captain Willoughby drew a chair to the side of that of his wife, seated himself, and took her hand before he answered. Little Evert, who sat on her knee, was played with, for a moment, as if to defer a disagreeable duty; not till then did he even speak.

"You know, dearest Wilhelmina," the captain finally commenced, "that there have never been any concealments between us, on the score of danger, even when I was a

professed soldier, and might be said to carry my life in my hand."

"You have ever found me reasonable, I trust; while feeling like a woman, mindful of my duty as a wife?"

"I have, love; this is the reason I have always dealt with you so frankly."

"We understand each other, Hugh. Now tell me the worst at once."

"I am not certain you will think there is any worst about it, Wilhelmina, as Bob's liberty is the object. I intend to go out myself, at the head of all the white men that remain, in order to deliver him from the hands of his enemies. This will leave you, for a time — six or seven hours, perhaps — in the Hut, with only the three blacks as a guard, and with the females. You need have no apprehension of an assault, however, everything indicating a different intention on the part of our enemies; on that score you may set your hearts at rest."

"All my apprehensions and prayers will be for you, my husband — for ourselves, we care not."

"This I expected; it is to lessen these very apprehensions that I have come to tell you my whole plan."

Captain Willoughby now related, with some minuteness, the substance of Mike's report, and his own plan, of the last of which we have already given an outline. Everything had been well matured in his mind, and all promised success. The men were apprised of the service on which they were to be employed, and every one of them had manifested the best spirit. They were then busy in equipping themselves; in half an hour they would be ready to march.

To all this Mrs. Willoughby listened like a soldier's wife, accustomed to the risks of a frontier warfare, though she felt like a woman. Beulah pressed little Evert to her heart, while her pallid countenance was turned to her father with a look that seemed to devour every syllable. As for Maud, a strange mixture of dread and wild delight were blended in her bosom. To have Bob liberated, and restored to them, was approaching perfect happiness, though

it surpassed her powers not to dread misfortunes. Nevertheless, the captain was so clear in his explanations, so calm in his manner, and of a judgment so approved, that his auditors felt far less concern than might naturally have been expected.

CHAPTER XXIV.

March — march — march!
Making sounds as they tread,
Ho-ho! how they step,
Going down to the dead.

COXE.

THE time Maud consumed in her meditations over the box and its contents, had been employed by the captain in preparations for his enterprise. Joyce, young Blodget, Jamie, and Mike, led by their commander in person, were to compose the whole force on the occasion; and every man had been busy in getting his arms, ammunition, and provisions ready, for the last half hour. When Captain Willoughby, therefore, had taken leave of his family, he found the party in a condition to move.

The first great desideratum was to quit the Hut unseen. Joel and his followers were still at work, in distant fields; but they all carefully avoided that side of the Knoll which would have brought them within reach of the musket, and this left all behind the cliff unobserved, unless Indians were in the woods in that direction. As Mike had so recently passed in by that route, however, the probability was the whole party still remained in the neighborhood of the mills, where all accounts agreed in saying they mainly kept. It was the intention of the captain, therefore, to sally by the rivulet and the rear of the house, and to gain the woods under cover of the bushes on the banks of the former, as had already been done by so many since the inroad.

The great difficulty was to quit the house, and reach the bed of the stream, unseen. This step, however, was a good deal facilitated by means of Joel's sally-port, the overseer having taken, himself, all the precautions against detection of which the case well admitted. Nevertheless,

there was the distance between the palisades and the base of the rocks, some forty or fifty yards, which was entirely uncovered, and had to be passed under the notice of any wandering eyes that might happen to be turned in that quarter. After much reflection, the captain and sergeant came to the conclusion to adopt the following mode of proceeding.

Blodget passed the hole, by himself, unarmed, rolling down the declivity until he reached the stream. Here a thicket concealed him sufficiently, the bushes extending along the base of the rocks, following the curvature of the rivulet. Once within these bushes, there was little danger of detection. As soon as it was ascertained that the young man was beneath the most eastern of the outer windows of the northern wing, the only one of the entire range that had bushes directly under it, all the rifles were lowered down to him, two at a time, care being had that no one should appear at the window during the operation. This was easily effected, jerks of the rope sufficing for the necessary signals when to haul in the line. The ammunition succeeded; and, in this manner, all the materials of offense and defense were soon collected on the margin of the stream.

The next step was to send the men out, one by one, imitating the precautions taken by Blodget. Each individual had his own provisions, and most of the men carried some sort of arms, such as a pistol or a knife, about their persons. In half an hour the four men were armed, and waited for the leader, concealed by the bushes on the border of the brook. It only remained for Captain Willoughby to give some instructions to those he left in the Hut, and to follow.

Pliny the elder, in virtue of his years, and some experience in Indian warfare, succeeded to the command of the garrison, in the absence of its chief. Had there remained a male white at the Knoll, this trust never could have devolved on him, it being thought contrary to the laws of nature for a negro to command one of the other color; but such was not the fact, and Pliny the elder succeeded pretty

much as a matter of course. Notwithstanding, he was to obey not only his particular old mistress, but both his young mistresses, who exercised an authority over him that was not to be disputed, without doing violence to all the received notions of the day. To him, then, the captain issued his final orders, bidding him be vigilant, and above all to keep the gates closed.

As soon as this was done, the husband and father went to his wife and children to take a last embrace. Anxious not to excite too strong apprehensions by his manner, this was done affectionately — solemnly, perhaps — but with a manner so guarded as to effect his object.

"I shall look for no other signal, or sign of success, Hugh," said the weeping wife, "than your own return, accompanied by our dearest boy. When I can hold you both in my arms, I shall be happy, though all the Indians of the continent were in the valley."

"Do not miscalculate as to time, Wilhelmina. That affectionate heart of yours sometimes travels over time and space in a way to give its owner unnecessary pain. Remember we shall have to proceed with great caution, both in going and returning; and it will require hours to make the *détour* I have in view. I hope to see you again before sunset, but a delay may carry us into the night. It may even become necessary to defer the final push until after dark."

This was melancholy intelligence for the females; but they listened to it with calmness, and endeavored to be, as well as to seem, resigned. Beulah received her father's kiss and blessing with streaming eyes, straining little Evert to her heart as he left her. Maud was the last embraced. He even led her, by gentle violence, to the court, keeping her in discourse by the way, exhorting her to support her mother's spirits by her own sense and steadfastness.

"I shall have Bob in the Hut, soon," he added, "and this will repay us all for more than twice the risks — all but you, little vixen; for your mother tells me you are getting, through some caprice of that variable humor of your sex, to be a little estranged from the poor fellow."

"Father!"

"Oh! I know it is not very serious; still, even Beulah tells me you once called him a Major of Foot."

"Did I?" said Maud, trembling in her whole frame lest her secret had been prematurely betrayed by the very attempt to conceal it. "My tongue is not always my heart."

"I know it, darling, unless where I am concerned. Treat the son as you will, Maud, I am certain that you will always love the father." A pressure to the heart, and kisses on the forehead, eyes, and cheeks followed. "You have all your own papers, Maud, and can easily understand your own affairs. When examined into, it will be seen that every shilling of your fortune has gone to increase it; and, little hussy, you are now become something like a great heiress."

"What does this mean, dearest, dearest father? Your words frighten me!"

"They should not, love. Danger is never increased by being prepared to meet it. I have been a steward, and wish it to be known that the duty has not been unfaithfully discharged. That is all. A hundred-fold am I repaid by possessing so dutiful and sweet a child."

Maud fell on her father's bosom and sobbed. Never before had he made so plain allusions to the true relations which existed between them; the papers she possessed having spoken for themselves, and having been given in silence. Nevertheless, as he appeared disposed to proceed no further, at present, the poor girl struggled to command herself, succeeded in part, rose, received her father's benediction, most solemnly and tenderly delivered, and saw him depart, with an air of calmness that subsequently astonished even herself.

We must now quit the interesting group that was left behind in the Hut, and accompany the adventurers in their march.

Captain Willoughby was obliged to imitate his men, in the mode of quitting the palisades. He had dressed himself in the American hunting-shirt and trousers for the occasion and, this being an attire he now rarely used, it greatly diminished the chances of his being recognized, if seen

Joyce was in a similar garb, though neither Jamie nor Mike could ever be persuaded to assume a style that both insisted so much resembled that of the Indians. As for Blodget, he was in the usual dress of a laborer.

As soon as he had reached the bottom of the cliff, the captain let the fact be known to old Pliny, by using his voice with caution, though sufficiently loud to be heard on the staging of the roof, directly above his head. The black had been instructed to watch Joel and his companions, in order to ascertain if they betrayed, in their movements, any consciousness of what was in progress at the Hut. The report was favorable, Pliny assuring his master that "All 'e men work, sir, just as afore. Joel hammer away a plough-handle, tinkerin' just like heself. Not an eye turn dis-away, massa."

Encouraged by this assurance, the whole party stole through the bushes that lined this part of the base of the cliffs, until they entered the bed of the stream. It was September, and the water was so low as to enable the party to move along the margin of the rivulet dry-shod, occasionally stepping from stone to stone. The latter expedient, indeed, was adopted wherever circumstances allowed, with a view to leave as few traces of a trail as was practicable. Otherwise the cover was complete; the winding of the rivulet preventing any distant view through its little reaches, and the thick fringe of the bushes on each bank effectually concealing the men against any passing, lateral glimpse of their movements.

Captain Willoughby had, from the first, apprehended an assault from this quarter. The house, in its elevation, however, possessed an advantage that would not be enjoyed by an enemy on the ground; and then the cliff offered very serious obstacles to anything like a surprise on that portion of the defenses. Notwithstanding, he now led his men, keeping a look riveted on the narrow lane in his front, far from certain that each turn might not bring him in presence of an advancing party of the enemy. No such unpleasant encounter occurred; and the margin of the forest was gained, without any appearance of the foe, and seemingly without discovery.

Just within the cover of the woods, a short reach of the rivulet lay fairly in sight, from the rear wing of the dwellings. It formed a beautiful object in the view; the ardent and tasteful Maud having sketched the silvery ribbon of water, as it was seen retiring within the recesses of the forest, and often calling upon others to admire its loveliness and picturesque effect. Here the captain halted, and made a signal to Old Piny, to let him know he waited for an answer. The reply was favorable, the negro showing the sign that all was still well. This was no sooner done, than the faithful old black hurried down to his mistress, to communicate the intelligence that the party was safely in the forest; while the adventurers turned, ascended the bank of the stream, and pursued their way on more solid ground.

Captain Willoughby and his men were now fairly engaged in the expedition, and every soul of them felt the importance and gravity of the duty he was on. Even Mike was fain to obey the order to be silent, as the sound of a voice, indiscreetly used, might betray the passage of the party to some outlying scouts of the enemy. Caution was even used in treading on dried sticks, lest their cracking should produce the same effect.

The sound of the axe was heard in the rear of the cabins, coming from a piece of woodland the captain had ordered cleared, with the double view of obtaining fuel, and of increasing his orchards. This little clearing was near a quarter of a mile from the flats, the plan being, still to retain a belt of forest round the latter; and it might have covered half a dozen acres of land, having now been used four or five years for the same purpose. To pass between this clearing and the cabins would have been too hazardous, and it became necessary to direct the march in a way to turn the former.

The cow-paths answered as guides for quite a mile, Mike being thoroughly acquainted with all their sinuosities. The captain and sergeant, however, each carried a pocket compass, an instrument without which few ventured far into the forests. Then the blows of the axes served as sounds to let the adventurers know their relative position, and as they

circled the place whence they issued, they gave the constant assurance of their own progress, and probable security.

The reader will probably comprehend the nature of the ground over which our party was now marching. The "flats" proper, or the site of the old Beaver Dam, have already been described. The valley, towards the south, terminated at the rocks of the mill, changing its character below that point, to a glen, or vast ravine. On the east were mountains of considerable height, and of unlimited range; to the north, the level land extended miles, though on a platform many feet higher than the level of the cleared meadows; while, to the west, along the route the adventurers were marching, broad slopes of rolling forest spread their richly-wooded surfaces, filled with fair promise for the future. The highest swell of this undulating forest was that nearest to the Hut, and it was its elevation only that gave the home-scene the character of a valley.

Captain Willoughby's object was to gain the summit of this first ridge of land, which would serve as a guide to his object, since it terminated at the line of rocks that made the water-fall, quite a mile, however, in the rear of the mills. it would carry him also quite beyond the clearing of the wood-choppers, and be effectually turning the whole of the enemy's position. Once at the precipitous termination caused by the face of rock that had been thrown to the surface by some geological phenomenon, he could not miss his way, since these rugged marks must of themselves lead him directly to the station known to be occupied by the body of his foes.

Half an hour served to reach the desired ridge, when the party changed its march, pursuing a direction nearly south, along its summit.

"Those axes sound nearer and nearer, sergeant," Captain Willoughby observed, after the march had lasted a long time in profound silence. "We must be coming up near the point where the men are at work."

"Does your honor reflect at all on the reason why these fellows are so particularly industrious in a time like this? — To me it has a very ambuscadish sort of look!"

"It cannot be connected with an ambuscade, Joyce, inasmuch as we are not supposed to be on a march. There can be no ambuscade, you will remember, practiced on a garrison."

"I ask your honor's pardon — may not a sortie be ambushed, as well as a march?"

"In that sense, perhaps, you may be right. And, now you mention it, I think it odd there should be so much industry at wood-chopping, in a moment like this. We will halt as soon as the sounds are fairly abreast of us, when you and I can reconnoitre the men, and ascertain the appearance of things for ourselves."

"I remember, sir, when your honor led out two companies of ours, with one of the Royal Irish, a major's command of good rights, to observe the left flank of the French, the evening before we stormed the enemy's works at Ty —"

"Your memory is beginning to fail you, Joyce," interrupted the captain, smiling. "We were far from storming those works, having lost two thousand men before them, and failed of seeing their inside at all."

"I always look upon a soldierly attempt, your honor, the same as a thing that is done. A more gallant stand than we made, I never witnessed; and, though we were driven back, I will allow, yet I call that assault as good as storming!"

"Well, have it your own way, Joyce. The morning before your storming, I remember to have led out three companies; though it was more in advance, than on either flank. The object was to unmask a suspected ambush."

"That's just what I wanted to be at, your honor. The general sent you, as an old captain, with three companies, to spring the trap, before he should put his own foot into it."

"He certainly did — and the movement had the desired effect."

"Better and better, sir. I remember we were fired on, and lost some ten or fifteen men, but I would not presume to say whether the march succeeded or not; for nothing was said of the affair, next day, in general orders, sir" —

"Next day we had other matters to occupy our minds

It was a bloody and a mournful occasion for England and her colonies."

"Well, your honor, that does not affect our movement, which you say yourself was useful."

"Very true, Joyce, though the great calamity of the succeeding day prevented the little success of the preceding morning from being mentioned in general orders. But to what does all this tend; as I know it must lead to something?"

"It was merely meant as a respectful hint, your honor, that the inferior should be sent out, now, according to our own ancient rules, to reconn'itre the clearing, while the commander-in-chief remain with the main body, to cover the retreat."

"I thank you, sergeant, and shall not fail to employ you, on all proper occasions. At present, it is my intention that we go together, leaving the men to take breath, in a suitable cover."

This satisfied Joyce, who was content to wait for orders. As soon as the sounds of the axes showed that the party were far enough in advance, and the formation of the land assured the captain that he was precisely where he wished to be, the men were halted, and left secreted in a cover made by the top of a fallen tree. This precaution was taken, lest any wandering savage might get a glimpse of their persons, if they stood lounging about in the more open forest, during the captain's absence.

This disposition made, the captain and sergeant, first examining the priming of their pieces, moved with the necessary caution towards the edge of the wood-choppers' clearing. The axe was a sufficient guide, and ere they had proceeded far the light began to shine through the trees, — proof in itself that they were approaching an opening in the forest.

"Let us incline to the left, your honor," said Joyce, respectfully; "there is a naked rock hereabouts, that completely overlooks the clearing, and where we can get even a peep at the Hut. I have often sat on it, when out with the gun, and wearied; for the next thing to being at home, is to see home."

"I remember the place, sergeant, and like your suggestion," answered the captain, with an eagerness that it was very unusual for him to betray. "I could march with a lighter heart, after getting another look at the Knoll, and being certain of its security."

The parties being both of a mind, it is not surprising that each looked eagerly for the spot in question. It was an isolated rock that rose some fifteen or twenty feet above the surface of the ground, having a width and depth about double its height — one of those common excrescences of the forest that usually possess interest for no one but the geologist. Such an object was not difficult to find in an open wood, and the search was soon rewarded by a discovery. Bending their steps that way, our two soldiers were quickly at its base. As is usual, the summit of this fragment of rock was covered with bushes; others shooting out, also, from the rich, warm earth at its base, or, to speak more properly, at its junction with the earth.

Joyce ascended first, leaving his rifle in the captain's charge. The latter followed, after having passed up his own and his companion's arms; neither being disposed to stir without having these important auxiliaries at command. Once on the rock, both moved cautiously to its eastern brow, care being had not to go beyond the cover. Here they stood, side by side, gazing on the scene that was outspread before them, through openings in the bushes.

To the captain's astonishment, he found himself within half musket shot of the bulk of the hostile party. A regular bivouac had been formed round a spring in the centre of the clearing, and bodies of trees had been thrown together so as to form a species of work which was rudely but effectually abatised by the branches. In a word, one of those strong, rough forest encampments had been made, which are so difficult to carry without artillery, more especially if well defended. By being placed in the centre of the clearing, an assault could not be made without exposing the assailants and the spring always assured to the garrison the great requisite, water.

There was a method and order in this arrangement that

surprised both our old soldiers. That Indians had resorted to this expedient, neither believed; nor would the careless, untaught, and inexperienced whites of the Mohawk be apt to adopt it, without a suggestion from some person acquainted with the usages of frontier warfare. Such persons were not difficult to find, it is true; and it was a proof that those claiming to be in authority, rightfully or not, were present.

There was something unlooked for, also, in the manner in which the party of strangers were lounging about, at a moment like that, seemingly doing nothing, or preparing for no service. Joyce, who was a man of method, and was accustomed to telling off troops, counted no less than forty-nine of these idlers, most of whom were lounging near the log entrenchment, though a few were sauntering about the clearing, conversing with the wood-choppers, or making their observations listlessly, and seemingly without any precise object in view.

"This is the most extr'or'nary sight, for a military expedition, I have ever seen, your honor," whispered Joyce, after the two had stood examining the position for quite a minute in silence. "A tolerable good log breast-work, I will allow, sir, and men enough to make it good against a sharp assault; but nothing like a guard, and not so much as a single sentinel. This is an affront to the art, Captain Willoughby; and it is such an affront to us, that I feel certain we might carry the post by surprise, if all felt the insult as I do myself."

"This is no time for rash acts or excited feelings, Joyce. Though, were my gallant boy with us, I do think we might make a push at these fellows, with very reasonable chances of success."

"Yes, your honor, and without him, too. A close fire, three cheers, and a vigorous charge would drive every one of the rascals into the woods!"

"Where they would rally, become the assailants in their turn, surround us, and either compel us to surrender, or starve us out. At all events, nothing of the sort must be undertaken until we have carried out the plan for the res-

cue of Major Willoughby. My hopes of success are greatly increased since I find the enemy has his principal post up here, where he must be a long half mile from the mill, even in a straight line. You have counted the enemy?"

"There are just forty-nine of them in sight, and I should think some eight or ten more sleeping about under the logs, as I occasionally discover a new one raising his head. Look, sir, does your honor see that manœuvre?"

"Do I see what, sergeant? — There is no visible change that I discover."

"Only an Indian chopping wood, Captain Willoughby, which is some such miracle as a white man painting."

The reader will have understood that all the hostile party that was lounging about this clearing were in Indian guise, with faces and hands of the well-known reddish color that marks the American aborigines. The two soldiers could discover many evidences that there was deception in these appearances, though they thought it quite probable that real red-men were mingled with the pale-faces. But, so little did the invaders respect the necessity of appearances in their present position, that one of these seeming savages had actually mounted a log, taken the axe from the hands of its owner, and begun to chop, with a vigor and skill that soon threw off chips in a way that no man can successfully imitate but the expert axe-man of the American interior.

"Pretty well that, sir, for a red-skin," said Joyce, smiling. "If there isn't white blood, aye, and Yankee blood in that chap's arm, I'll give him some of my own to help color it. Step this way, your honor — only a foot or two — there, sir; by looking through the opening just above the spot where that very make-believe Injin is scattering his chips as if they were so many kernels of corn that he was tossing to the chickens, you will get a sight of the Hut."

The fact was so. By altering his own position a little on the rock, Captain Willoughby got a full view of the entire buildings of the Knoll. It is true, he could not see the lawn without the works, nor quite all of the stockade, but the whole of the western wing, or an entire side-view

of the dwelling, was obtained. Everything seemed as tranquil and secure, in and around them, as if they vegetated in a Sabbath in the wilderness. There was something imposing even, in the solemn silence of their air, and the captain now saw that if he had been struck and rendered uneasy by the mystery that accompanied the inaction and quiet of his invaders, they, in their turns, might experience some such sensations as they gazed on the repose of the Hut, and the apparent security of its garrison. But for Joel's desertion, indeed, and the information he had carried with him, there could be little doubt that the stranger must have felt the influence of such doubts to a very material extent. Alas! as things were, it was not probable they could be long imposed on by any seeming calm.

Captain Willoughby felt reluctance to tear himself away from the spectacle of that dwelling which contained so many that were dear to him. Even Joyce gazed at the house with pleasure, for it had been his quarters, now, so many years, and he had looked forward to the time when he should breathe his last in it. Connected with his old commander by a tie that was inseparable, so far as human wishes could control human events, it was impossible that the sergeant could go from the place where they had left so many precious beings almost in the keeping of Providence, at a moment like that, altogether without emotion. While each was thus occupied in mind, there was a perfect stillness. The men of the party had been so far drilled, as to speak in low voices, and nothing they said was audible on the rock. The axes alone broke the silence of the woods, and to ears so accustomed to their blows, they offered no intrusion. In the midst of the eloquent calm, the bushes of the rock rustled, as it might be with the passage of a squirrel or a serpent. Of the last the country had but few, and they of the most innocent kind, while the former abounded. Captain Willoughby turned, expecting to see one of these little restless beings, when his gaze encountered a swarthy face, and two glowing eyes, almost within reach of his arm. That this was a real Indian was

beyond dispute, and the crisis admitting of no delay, the old officer drew a dirk, and had already raised his arm to strike, when Joyce arrested the blow.

"This is Nick, your honor," said the sergeant, inquiringly — "is he friend or foe?"

"What says he himself?" answered the captain, lowering his hand in doubt. "Let him speak to his own character."

Nick now advanced and stood calmly and fearlessly at the side of the two white men. Still there was ferocity in his look, and an indecision in his movements. He certainly might betray the adventurers at any instant, and they felt all the insecurity of their situation. But accident had brought Nick directly in front of the opening through which was obtained the view of the Hut. In turning from one to the other of the two soldiers, his quick eye took in this glimpse of the buildings, and it became riveted there as by the charm of fascination. Gradually the ferocity left his countenance, which grew human and soft.

"Squaw in wigwam," said the Tuscarora, throwing forward a hand with its fore-finger pointing towards the house. "Ole squaw — young squaw. Good. Wyandotté sick, she cure him. Blood in Injin body; thick blood — nebber forget good — nebber forget bad."

CHAPTER XXV.

Every stride — every stamp,
Every footfall is bolder;
'Tis a skeleton's tramp,
With a skull on its shoulder!
But ho, how he steps
With a high-tossing head,
That clay-covered bone,
Going down to the dead!

COXE.

NICK's countenance was a fair index to his mind; nor were his words intended to deceive. Never did Wyandotté forget the good, or evil, that was done him. After looking intently, a short time, at the Hut, he turned and abruptly demanded of his companions, —

"Why come here? Like to see enemy between you and wigwam?"

As all Nick said was uttered in a guarded tone, as if he fully entered into the necessity of remaining concealed from those who were in such a dangerous vicinity, it served to inspire confidence, inducing the two soldiers to believe him disposed to serve them.

"Am I to trust in you as a friend?" demanded the captain, looking the Indian steadily in the eye.

"Why won't trust? Nick no here — gone away — Nick nebber come ag'in — Wyandotté here — who no trust Wyandotté? Yengeese always trust great chief."

"I shall take you at your word, Wyandotté, and tell you everything, hoping to make an ally of you. But first explain to me why you left the Hut last night — friends do not desert friends."

"Why leave wigwam? Because want to. Wyandotté come when he want; go when he want. Mike go too. Went to see son — come back; tell story; eh?"

"Yes, it has happened much as you say, and I am willing to think it all occurred with the best motives. Can you tell me anything of Joel, and the others who have left me?"

"Why tell? — cap'in look; he see. Some chop — some plough — some weed — some dig ditch. All like ole time. Bury hatchet — tired of war-path — why cap'in ask?"

"I see all you tell me. You know, then, that those fellows have made friends with the hostile party?"

"No need know — see. Look — Injin chop, pale-face look on! Call that war?"

"I do see that which satisfies me the men in paint yonder are not all red-men."

"No — cap'in right — tell him so in wigwam. But dat Mohawk — dog — rascal — Nick's enemy!"

This was said with a gleam of fierceness shooting across the swarthy face, and a menacing gesture of the hand, in the direction of a real savage who was standing indolently leaning against a tree, at a distance so small as to allow those on the rock to distinguish his features. The vacant expression of this man's countenance plainly denoted that he was totally unconscious of the vicinity of danger. It expressed the listless vacancy of an Indian in a state of perfect rest — his stomach full, his body at ease, his mind peaceful.

"I thought Nick was not here," the captain quietly observed, smiling on the Tuscarora a little ironically.

"Cap'in right — Nick no here. Well for dog 'tis so. Too mean for Wyandotté to touch. What cap'in come for? Eh! Better tell chief — get council without lightin' fire."

"As I see no use in concealing my plan from you, Wyandotté," — Nick seemed pleased whenever this name was pronounced by others, — "I shall tell it you, freely. Still, you have more to relate to me. Why are you here? And how came you to discover us?"

"Follow trail; know cap'in foot — know sergeant foot — know Mike foot; see so many foot, follow him. Leave so many," holding up three fingers, "in bushes; so many,"

holding up two fingers, "come here. Foot tell which come here; Wyandotté chief — he follow chief."

"When did you first strike, or see our trail, Tuscarora?"

"Up here — down yonder — over dere." Captain Willoughby understood this to mean, that the Indian had crossed the trail or seen it in several places. "Plenty trail; plenty foot to tell all about it. Wyandotté see foot of friend — why he don't follow, eh?"

"I hope this is all so, old warrior, and that you will prove yourself a friend indeed. We are out in the hope of liberating my son, and we came here to see what our enemies are about."

The Tuscarora's eyes were like two inquisitors, as he listened; but he seemed satisfied that the truth was told him. Assuming an air of interest, he inquired if the captain knew where the major was confined. A few words explained everything, and the parties soon understood each other.

"Cap'in right," observed Nick. "Son in cupboard still; but plenty warrior near, to keep eye on him."

"You know his position, Wyandotté, and can aid us materially, if you will. What say you, chief; will you take service, once more, under your old commander?"

"Who he sarve — King George — Congress — eh?"

"Neither. I am neutral, Tuscarora, in the present quarrel. I only defend myself, and the rights which the laws assure to me, let whichever party govern, that may."

"Dat bad. Nebber neutral in hot war. Get rob from bot' side. Always be one or t'oder, cap'in."

"You may be right, Nicholas, but a conscientious man may think neither wholly right nor wholly wrong. I wish never to lift the hatchet, unless my quarrel be just."

"Injin no understand dat. Throw hatchet at enemy — what matter what he say — good t'ing, bad t'ing? He enemy — dat enough. Take scalp from enemy — don't touch friend."

"That may do for your mode of warfare, Tuscarora, but it will hardly do for mine. I must feel that I have right on my side, before I am willing to take life."

"Cap'in always talk so, eh? When he soldier, and general say shoot ten, forty, t'ousand Frenchmen, den he say, 'Stop, general — no hurry — let cap'in t'ink. By'm-by he'll go and take scalp;' eh!"

It exceeded our old soldier's self-command not to permit the blood to rush into his face, at this home thrust; for he felt the cunning of the Indian had involved him in a seeming contradiction.

"That was when I was in the army, Wyandotté," he answered, notwithstanding his confusion, "when my first and highest duty was to obey the orders of my superiors. Then I acted as a soldier; now, I hope to act as a man."

"Well, Indian chief always in army. Always high duty, and obey superior — obey Manitou, and take scalp from enemy. War-path always open, when enemy at t'other end."

"This is no place to discuss such questions, chief; nor have we the time. Do you go with us?"

Nick nodded an assent, and signed for the other to quit the rocks. The captain hesitated a moment, during which he stood intently studying the scene in the clearing.

"What say you, Tuscarora? the sergeant has proposed assaulting that breastwork."

"No good, cap'in. You fire, halloo, rush on — well, kill four, six, two — rest run away. Injin down at mill hear rifle; follow smoke — where major, den? Get major, first — t'ink about enemy afterwards."

As Nick said this he repeated the gesture to descend; and he was obeyed in silence. The captain now led the way back to his party; and soon rejoined it. All were glad to see Nick, for he was known to have a sure rifle, to be fearless as the turkey-cock; and to possess a sagacity in the woods, that frequently amounted to a species of intuition.

"Who lead, cap'in or injin?" asked the Tuscarora, in his sententious manner.

"Och, Nick, ye're a cr'ature!" muttered Mike. "Divil bur-r-rn me, Jamie, but I t'inks the fallie would crass the very three-tops, rather than miss the majjor's habitation"

"Not a syllable must be uttered," said the captain, raising a hand in remonstrance. "I will lead, and Wyandotté will march by my side, and give me his counsel in whispers. Joyce will bring up the rear. Blodget, you will keep a sharp lookout to the left, while Jamie will do the same to the right. As we approach the mills, stragglers may be met in the woods, and our march must be conducted with the greatest caution. Now follow, and be silent."

The captain and Nick led, and the whole party followed, observing the silence which had been enjoined on them. The usual manner of marching on a war-path, in the woods, was for the men to follow each other singly; an order that has obtained the name of "Indian file," the object being to diminish the trail, and conceal the force of the expedition, by each man treading in his leader's footsteps. On the present occasion, however, the captain induced Nick to walk at his side, feeling an uneasiness on the subject of the Tuscarora's fidelity, that he could not entirely conquer. The pretext given was very different, as the reader will suppose. By seeing the print of a moccasin in company with that of a boot, any straggler that crossed the trail might be led to suppose it had been left by the passage of a party from the clearing or the mill. Nick quietly assented to this reasoning, and fell in by the side of the captain without remonstrance.

Vigilant eyes were kept on all sides of the line of march, though it was hoped and believed that the adventurers had struck upon a route too far west to be exposed to interruption. A quarter of a mile nearer the flats might have brought them within range of stragglers; but, following the summit of the ridge, there was a certain security in the indolence which would be apt to prevent mere idlers from sauntering up an ascent. At all events, no interruption occurred, the party reaching in safety the rocks that were a continuation of the range which formed the precipice at the falls — the sign that they had gone far enough to the south. At this period, the precipice was nearly lost in the rising of the lower land, but its margin was sufficiently distinct to form a good mask.

Descending to the plateau beneath, the captain and Nick now inclined to the east, the intention being to come in upon the mills from the rear. As the buildings lay in the ravine, this could only be done by making a rapid descent immediately in their vicinity; a formation of the ground that rendered the march, until within pistol-shot of its termination, reasonably secure. Nick also assured his companions that he had several times traversed this very plateau, and that he had met no signs of footsteps on it; from which he inferred that the invaders had not taken the trouble to ascend the rugged cliffs that bounded the western side of the glen.

The approach to the summit of the cliff was made with caution, though the left flank of the adventurers was well protected by the abrupt descent they had already made from the terrace above. This left little more than the right flank and the front to be watched, the falling away of the land forming, also, a species of cover for the rear. It is not surprising, then, that the verge of the ravine or glen was attained, and no discovery was made. The spot being favorable, the captain immediately led down a winding path, that was densely fringed with bushes, towards the level of the buildings.

The glen of the mills was very narrow; so much so, as barely to leave sites for the buildings themselves, and three or four cabins for the workmen. The mills were placed in advance, as near as possible to the course of the water; while the habitations of the workmen were perched on shelves of the rocks, or such level bits of bottom-land as offered. Owing to this last circumstance, the house of Daniel the miller, or that in which it was supposed the major was still confined, stood by itself, and fortunately, at the very foot of the path by which the adventurers were descending. All this was favorable, and had been taken into the account as a material advantage, by Captain Willoughby, when he originally conceived the plan of the present sortie.

When the chimney of the cabin was visible over the bushes, Captain Willoughby halted his party, and repeated

his instructions to Joyce, in a voice very little raised above a whisper. The sergeant was ordered to remain in his present position, until he received a signal to advance. As for the captain himself, he intended to descend as near as might be to the buttery of the cabin, and reconnoitre, before he gave the final order. This buttery was in a lean-to, as a small addition to the original building was called in the parlance of the country; and, the object being shade and coolness, on account of the milk with which it was usually well stored at this season of the year, it projected back to the very cliff, where it was half hid in bushes and young trees. It had but a single small window, that was barred with wood to keep out cats, and such wild vermim as affected milk, nor was it either lathed or plastered; these two last being luxuries not often known in the log tenements of the frontier. Still it was of solid logs, chinked in with mortar, and made a very effectual prison, with the door properly guarded; the captive being deprived of edged tools. All this was also known to the father, when he set forth to effect the liberation of his son, and, like the positions of the buildings themselves, had been well weighed in his estimate of the probabilities and chances.

As soon as his orders were given, Captain Willoughby proceeded down the path, accompanied only by Nick. He had announced his intention to send the Tuscarora ahead to reconnoitre, then to force himself among the bushes between the lean-to and the rocks, and there to open a communication with the major through the chinks of the logs. After receiving Nick's intelligence, his plan was to be governed by circumstances, and to act accordingly.

"God bless you, Joyce," said the captain, squeezing the sergeant's hand as he was on the point of descending. "We are on ticklish service, and require all our wits about us. If anything happen to me, remember that my wife and daughter will mainly depend on you for protection."

"I shall consider that as your honor's orders, sir, and no more need be said to me, Captain Willoughby."

The captain smiled on his old follower, and Joyce thought that never had he seen the fine, manly face of his superior

beam with a calmer or sweeter expression, than it did as he returned his own pressure of the hand. The two adventurers were both careful, and their descent was noiseless. The men above listened in breathless silence, but the stealthy approach of the cat upon the bird could not have been more still, than that of these two experienced warriors.

The place where Joyce was left with the men might have been fifty feet above the roof of the cabin, and almost perpendicularly over the narrow vacancy that was known to exist between the rocks and the lean-to. Still the bushes and trees were so thick as to prevent the smallest glimpse at objects below, had the shape of the cliff allowed it, while they even intercepted sounds. Joyce fancied, nevertheless, that he heard the rustling bushes, as the captain forced his way into the narrow space he was to occupy, and he augured well of the fact, since it proved that no opposition had been encountered. Half an hour of forest silence followed, that was only interrupted by the tumbling of the waters over the natural dam. At the end of that weary period, a shout was heard in front of the mills, and the party raised their pieces, in a vague apprehension that some discovery had been made that was about to bring on a crisis. Nothing further occurred, however, to confirm this impression, and an occasional burst of laughter, that evidently came from white men, rather served to allay the apprehension. Another half hour passed, during which no interruption was heard. By this time Joyce became uneasy, a state of things having arrived for which no provision had been made in his instructions. He was about to leave his command under the charge of Jamie, and descend himself to reconnoitre, when a footstep was heard coming up the path. Nothing but the deep attention and breathless stillness of the men could have rendered the sound of a tread so nearly noiseless, audible; but heard it was, at a moment when every sense was wrought up to its greatest powers. Rifles were lowered, in readiness to receive assailants, but each was raised again, as Nick came slowly into view. The Tuscarora was calm in manner, as if no incident had occurred to disconcert the arrangement, though

his eyes glanced around him, like those of a man who searched for an absent person.

"Where cap'in? Where major?" Nick asked, as soon as his glance had taken in the faces of all present.

"We must ask that of you, Nick," returned Joyce. "We have not seen the captain, nor had any orders from him, since he left us."

This answer seemed to cause the Indian more surprise than it was usual for him to betray, and he pondered a moment in obvious uneasiness.

"Can't stay here alway," he muttered. "Best go see. By'm-by trouble come; then, too late."

The sergeant was greatly averse to moving without orders. He had his instructions how to act in every probable contingency, but none that covered the case of absolute inaction on the part of those below. Nevertheless, twice the time necessary to bring things to issue had gone by, and neither signal, shot, nor alarm had reached his ears.

"Do you know anything of the major, Nick?" the sergeant demanded, determined to examine the case thoroughly ere he came to a decision.

"Major, dere — see him at door — plenty sentinel. All good — where cap'in?"

"Where did you leave him? — you can give the last account of him."

"Go in behind cupboard — under rock — plenty bushes — all right — son dere."

"This must be looked to; perhaps his honor has fallen into a fit; such things sometimes happen; and a man who is fighting for his own child, doesn't feel, Jamie, all the same as one who fights on a general principle, as it might be."

"Na — ye're right, Sairgeant J'yce, and ye'll be doing the kind and prudent act, to gang doon yersal', and investigate the trainsaction with yer ain een."

This Joyce determined to do, directing Nick to accompany him, as a guide. The Indian seemed glad to comply, and there was no delay in proceeding. It required but a minute to reach the narrow passage between the cliff and the lean-to. The bushes were carefully shoved aside, and

Joyce entered. He soon caught a glimpse of the hunting shirt, and then he was about to withdraw, believing that he was in error, in anticipating orders. But a short look at his commander removed all scruples; for he observed that he was seated on a projection of the rocks, with his body bowed forward, apparently leaning on the logs of the building. This seemed to corroborate the thought about a fit and the sergeant pressed eagerly forward to ascertain the truth.

Joyce touched his commander's arm, but no sign of consciousness came from the latter. He then raised his body upright, placing the back in a reclining attitude against the rocks, and started back himself when he caught a glimpse of the death-like hue of the face. At first, the notion of the fit was strong with the sergeant; but, in changing his own position, he caught a glimpse of a little pool of blood which at once announced that violence had been used.

Although the sergeant was a man of great steadiness of nerves, and unchangeable method, he fairly trembled as he ascertained the serious condition of his old and well-beloved commander. Notwithstanding, he was too much of a soldier to neglect anything that circumstances required. On examination, he discovered a deep and fatal wound between two of the ribs, which had evidently been inflicted with a common knife. The blow had passed into the heart, and Captain Willoughby was, out of all question, dead! He had breathed his last, within six feet of his own gallant son who, ignorant of all that passed, was little dreaming of the proximity of one so dear to him, as well as of his dire condition.

Joyce was a man of powerful frame, and, at that moment he felt he was master of a giant's strength. First assuring himself of the fact that the wounded man had certainly ceased to breathe, he brought the arms over his own shoulders, raised the body on his back, and walked from the place with less attention to caution than on entering but with sufficient care to prevent exposure. Nick stood watching his movements with a wondering look, and as soon as there was room, he aided in supporting the corpse.

In this manner the two went up the path, bearing their senseless burden. A gesture directed the party with Jamie to precede the two who had been below, and the sergeant did not pause even to breathe, until he had fairly reached the summit of the cliff; then he halted in a place removed from the danger of immediate discovery. The body was laid reverently on the ground, and Joyce renewed his examination with greater ease and accuracy, until perfectly satisfied that the captain must have ceased to breathe, nearly an hour.

This was a sad and fearful blow to the whole party. No one, at such a moment, thought of inquiring into the manner in which their excellent master had received his death-blow; but every thought was bent either on the extent of the calamity, or on the means of getting back to the Hut. Joyce was the soul of the party. His rugged face assumed a stern, commanding expression; but every sign of weakness had disappeared. He gave his orders promptly, and the men even started when he spoke, so bent on obtaining obedience did he appear to be.

The rifles were converted into a bier, the body was placed upon it, and the four men then raised the burden, and began to retrace their footsteps, in melancholy silence. Nick led the way, pointing out the difficulties of the path, with a sedulousness of attention and gentleness of manner that none present had ever before witnessed in the Tuscarora. He even appeared to have become woman, to use one of his own peculiar expressions.

No one speaking, and all the men working with good will, the retreat, notwithstanding the burden with which it was encumbered, was made with a rapidity greatly exceeding the advance. Nick led the way with an unerring eye, even selecting better ground than that which the white men had been able to find on their march. He had often traversed all the hills, in the character of a hunter, and to him the avenues of the forest were as familiar as the streets of his native town become to the burgher. He made no offer to become one of the bearers; this would have been opposed to his habits; but, in all else, the In

dian manifested gentleness and solicitude. His apprehen sion seemed to be, and so he expressed it, that the Mo hawks might get the scalp of the dead man — a disgrac that he seemed as solicitous to avoid as Joyce himself the sergeant, however, keeping in view the feelings of th survivors, rather than any notions of military pride.

Notwithstanding the stern resolution that prevaile among the men, that return march was long and weary The distance of itself exceeded two miles, and there wer the inequalities and obstacles of a forest to oppose them Perseverance and strength, however, overcame all difficul ties; and at the end of two hours, the party approache the point where it became necessary to enter the bed o the rivulet, or expose their sad procession by marching i open view of any who might be straggling in the rear o the Hut. A species of desperate determination had in fluenced the men in their return march, rendering then reckless of discovery, or its consequences; a circumstanc that had greatly favored their object; the adventurou and bold frequently encountering fewer difficulties, in th affairs of war, than the cautious and timid. But an em barrassment now presented itself that was far more diffi cult to encounter than any which proceeded from persona risks. The loving family of the deceased was to be met; wife and daughters apprised of the fearful loss that, in th providence of God, had suddenly alighted on their house

"Lower the body, men, and come to a halt," said Joyce using the manner of authority, though his voice trembled "we must consult together, as to our next step."

There was a brief and decent pause, while the part placed the lifeless body on the grass, face uppermost, wit the limbs laid in order, and everything about it dispose of in a seemliness that betokened profound respect for th senseless clay, even after the noble spirit had departe Mike alone could not resist his strong native propensity t talk. The honest fellow raised a hand of his late maste and, kissing it with strong affection, soliloquized as follow in a tone that was more rebuked by feeling, than an apprehension of consequences.

"Little need had ye of a praist, and extreme unction," he said. "The likes of yerself always kapes a clane breast; and the knife that went into yer heart found nothing that ye need have been ashamed of! Sorrow come over me, but yer lass is as great a one to meself, as if I had tidings of the sinking of ould Ireland into the salt say, itself; a thing that never can happen, and niver will happen; no, not even at the last day; as all agree the wor-r-ld is to be burned and not drowned. And who'll there be to tell this same to the missus, and Miss Beuly, and pratthy Miss Maud, and the babby, in the bargain? Divil bur-r-n me, if 'twill be Michael O'Hearn, who has too much sorrow of his own, to be running about, and d'aling it out to other people. Sargeant, that will be yer own jewty, and I pities the man that has to perform it."

"No man will see me shrink from a duty, O'Hearn," said Joyce, stiffly, while with the utmost difficulty he kept the tears from breaking out of a fountain that had not opened, in this way, for twenty years. "It may bear hard on my feelings — I do not say it will not — but duty is duty, and it must be done. Corporal Allen, you see the state of things; the commanding officer is among the casualties, and nothing would be simpler than our course, were it not for Madam Willoughby — God bless her, and have her in his holy keeping — and the young ladies. It is proper to deliberate a little about them. To you then, as an elderly and experienced man, I first apply for an opinion."

"Sorrow's an unwelcome guest, whether it comes expected, or without any previous knowledge. The hairts of the widow and faitherless must be stricken, and it's little that a' our consolations and expairiments will prevail agin the feelin's o' natur'. Pheelosophy and religion tell us that the body's no mair than a clod o' the valley when the speerit has fled; but the hairt is unapt to listen to wisdom while the grief is fraish, and of the severity of an unlooked-for sairtainty. I see little good, therefore, in doing mair than just sending in a messenger to clear the way a little for the arrival of truth, in the form o' death itsal'."

"I have been thinking of this — will you take the office, Jamie, as a man of years and discretion?"

"Na — na — ye'll be doing far better by sending a younger man. Age has weakened my memory, and I'll be overlooking some o' the saircumstances in a manner that will be unseemly for the occasion. Here is Blodget, a youth of ready wit, and limber tongue."

"I wouldn't do it, mason, to be the owner of ten such properties as this!" exclaimed the young Rhode Islander, actually recoiling a step, as if he retreated before a dreaded foe.

"Well, sairgeant, ye've Michael here, who belangs to a kirk that has so little seempathy with Protestantism as to lessen the pain o' the office. Death is a near ally to religion, and Michael, by taking a religious view o' the maither, might bring his hairt into such a condition of insensibility, as wad give him little to do but to tell what has happened, leaving God, in his ain mairey, to temper the wind to the shorn lamb."

"You hear, O'Hearn?" said the sergeant, stiffly; "everybody seems to expect that you will do this duty."

"Jewty! D'ye call it a jewty for a man in my situation to break the hearts of missus, and Miss Beuly, and pratthy Miss Maud, and the babby? for babbies has hearts as well as the stoutest man as is going. Divil bur-r-n me, then, if ye gets out of my mout' so much as a hint that the captain's dead and gone from us, forever and ever, amen! Ye may send me in, for ye're corporals, and sergeants, and the likes of yees, and I'll obey as a souldier, seein' that he would have wished as much himself, had the breat' stayed in his body, which it has not, on account of its l'aving his sowl on 'arth, and departing with his corporeal part for the mansions of happiness, the Blessed Mary have mercy on him, whether here or there — but the captain was not the man to wish a fait'ful follower to afflict his own wife; and so I'll have not'in' to do with such a message, at all at all."

"Nick go," said the Indian, calmly; "used to carry message — carry him for cap'in, once more."

"Well, Nick, you may do it certainly, if so disposed,"

answered Joyce, who would have accepted the services of a Chinese rather than undertake the office in person. "You will remember and speak to the ladies gently, and not break the news too suddenly."

"Yes — squaw soft heart — Nick know — had moder — had wife, once — had darter."

"Very well; this will be an advantage, men, as Nick is the only married man among us; and married men should best understand dealing with females."

Joyce then held a private communication with the Tuscarora, that lasted some five or six minutes, when the last leaped nimbly into the bed of the stream, and was soon concealed by the bushes of one of its reaches.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Heart leaps to heart — the sacred flood
That warms us is the same;
That good old man — his honest blood
Alike we fondly claim.

SPRAGUE.

ALTHOUGH Nick commenced his progress with so much seeming zeal and activity, his speed abated, the moment he found himself beyond the sight of those he had left in the woods. Before he reached the foot of the cliff, his trot had degenerated to a walk; and when he actually found he was at its base, he seated himself on a stone, apparently to reflect on the course he ought to pursue.

The countenance of the Tuscarora expressed a variety of emotions while he thus remained stationary. At first, it was fierce, savage, exulting; then it became gentler, soft, perhaps repentant. He drew his knife from its buckskin sheath, and eyed the blade with a gaze expressive of uneasiness. Perceiving that a clot of blood had collected at the junction with the handle, it was carefully removed by the use of water. His look next passed over his whole person, in order to ascertain if any more of these betrayers of his fearful secret remained; after which he seemed more at ease.

"Wyandotté's back don't ache now," he growled to himself. "Ole sore heal up. Why cap'in touch him? T'ink Injin no got feelin'? Good man, sometime; bad man, sometime. Sometime, live; sometime, die. Why tell Wyandotté he flog ag'in, just as go to enemy's camp? No; back feel well, now — nebber smart, any more."

When this soliloquy was ended, Nick arose, cast a look up at the sun, to ascertain how much of the day still remained, glanced towards the Hut, as if examining the nature

of its defenses, stretched himself like one who was weary, and peeped out from behind the bushes, in order to see how those who were afield still occupied themselves. All this done, with singular deliberation and steadiness, he arranged his light dress, and prepared to present himself before the wife and daughters of the man, whom, three hours before, he had remorselessly murdered. Nick had often meditated this treacherous deed, during the thirty years which had elapsed between his first flogging and the present period; but circumstances had never placed its execution safely in his power. The subsequent punishments had increased the desire, for a few years; but time had so far worn off the craving for revenge, that it would never have been actively revived, perhaps, but for the unfortunate allusions of the victim himself to the subject. Captain Willoughby had been an English soldier, of the school of the last century. He was naturally a humane and just man, but he believed in the military axiom, that "the most flogging regiments were the best fighting regiments;" and perhaps he was not in error, as regards the lower English character. It was a fatal error, however, to make in relation to an American savage; one who had formerly exercised the functions, and who had not lost all the feelings, of a chief. Unhappily, at a moment when everything depended on the fidelity of the Tuscarora, the captain had bethought him of his old expedient for insuring prompt obedience, and, by way of a reminder, he made an allusion to his former mode of punishment. As Nick would have expressed it, "The old sores smarted;" the wavering purpose of thirty years was suddenly and fiercely revived, and the knife passed into the heart of the victim, with a rapidity that left no time for appeals to the tribunal of God's mercy. In half a minute, Captain Willoughby had ceased to breathe.

Such had been the act of the man who now passed through the opening of the palisade, and entered the former habitation of his victim. A profound stillness reigned in and around the Hut, and no one appeared to question the unexpected intruder. Nick passed, with his noiseless step, round to the gate, which he found secured. It was neces-

sary to knock, and this he did in a way effectually to bring a porter

"Who dere?" demanded the elder Pliny, from within.

"Good friend; open gate — come wid message from cap'in."

The natural distaste to the Indians which existed among the blacks of the Knoll, included the Tuscarora. This disgust was mingled with a degree of dread; and it was difficult for beings so untutored and ignorant, at all times to draw the proper distinctions between Indian and Indian. In their wonder-loving imaginations, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Mohawks, Onondagas, and Iroquois were all jumbled together in inextricable confusion, a red-man being a red-man, and a savage a savage. It is not surprising, therefore, that Pliny the elder should hesitate about opening the gate, and admitting one of the detested race, though a man so well known to them all, in the peculiar situation of the family. Luckily, Great Smash happened to be near, and her husband called her to the gate by one of the signals that was much practiced between them.

"Who you t'ink out dere?" asked Pliny the elder of his consort, with a very significant look.

"How you t'ink guess, Ole Plin? You 'spose nigger wench like Albonny wise woman, dat she see t'rough a gate, and know ebberyt'ing, and little more!"

"Well, dat Sassy Nick. What you say now?"

"You sartain, Ole Plin?" asked Mistress Smash, with a face ominous of evil.

"Sartain as ear. Talk wid him — he want to come in. What you t'ink?"

"Nebber open gate, Old Plin, till mistress tell you. You stay here — dere; lean agin gate wid all you might, dere; now I go call Miss Maud. She all alone in librarim, and will know what best. Mind you lean agin gate well, Ole Plin."

Pliny the elder nodded assent, placed his shoulders resolutely against the massive timbers, and stood propping a defense that would have made a respectable resistance to a battering-ram, like another Atlas, upholding a world. His

duty was short, however, his "lady" soon returning with Maud, who was hastening breathlessly to learn the news.

"Is it you, Nick?" called out the sweet voice of our heroine through the crevices of the timber.

The Tuscarora started, as he so unexpectedly heard those familiar sounds; for an instant, his look was dark; then the expression changed to pity and concern, and his reply was given with less than usual of the abrupt, guttural brevity that belonged to his habits.

"'Tis Nick — Sassy Nick — Wyandotté, Flower of the Woods," for so the Indian often termed Maud. "Got news — cap'in send him. Meet party and go along. Nobody here; only Wyandotté. Nick see major, too — say sometʻing to young squaw."

This decided the matter. The gate was unbarred, and Nick in the court in half a minute. Great Smash stole a glance without, and beckoned Pliny the elder to join her, in order to see the extraordinary spectacle of Joel and his associates toiling in the fields. When they drew in their heads, Maud and her companion were already in the library. The message from Robert Willoughby had induced our heroine to seek this room; for, placing little confidence in the delicacy of the messenger, she recoiled from listening to his words in the presence of others.

But Nick was in no haste to speak. He took the chair to which Maud motioned, and he sat looking at her, in a way that soon excited her alarm.

"Tell me, if your heart has any mercy in it, Wyandotté, has aught happened to Major Willoughby?"

"He well — laugh, talk, feel good. Mind not'ing. He prisoner; don't touch he scalp."

"Why, then, do you wear so ominous a look — your face is the very harbinger of evil."

"Bad news, if trut' must come. What you' name, young squaw?"

"Surely, surely, you must know that well, Nick! I am Maud — your old friend, Maud."

"Pale-face hab two name — Tuscarora got t'ree. Sometime, Nick — sometime, Sassy Nick — sometime, Wyandotté."

"You know my name is Maud Willoughby," returned our heroine, coloring to the temples with a certain secret consciousness of her error, but preferring to keep up old appearances.

"Dat call you' fader's name, Meredit'; no Willoughby."

"Merciful Providence! and has this great secret been known to you, too, Nick!"

"He no secret — know all about him. Wyandotté dere. See Major Meredit' shot. He good chief — nebber flog — nebber strike Injin. Nick know fader, know moder — know squaw, when pappoose."

"And why have you chosen this particular moment to tell me all this? Has it any relation to your message — to Bob — to Major Willoughby, I mean?" demanded Maud, nearly gasping for breath.

"No relation, tell you," said Nick, a little angrily. "Why make relation, when no relation at all? Meredit' — no Willoughby. Ask moder; ask major; ask chaplain — all tell trut'! No need to be so feelin'; no you' fader, at all."

"What can you — what do you mean, Nick? Why do you look so wild — so fierce — so kind — so sorrowful — so angry? You must have bad news to tell me."

"Why bad to you? He no fader — only fader friend. You can't help it; fader die when you pappoose. Why you care, now, for dis?"

Maud now actually gasped for breath. A frightful glimpse of the truth gleamed before her imagination, though it was necessarily veiled in the mist of uncertainty. She became pale as death, and pressed her hand upon her heart, as if to still its beating. Then, by a desperate effort, she became more calm, and obtained the power to speak.

"Oh! is it so, Nick! — can it be so!" she said; "my father has fallen in this dreadful business?"

"Fader kill twenty years ago; tell you dat, how often?" answered the Tuscarora, angrily; for, in his anxiety to lessen the shock to Maud, for whom this wayward savage had a strange sentiment of affection, that had grown out of her gentle kindnesses to himself, on a hundred occasions, he fancied if she knew that Captain Willoughby

was not actually her father, her grief at his loss would be less. "Why you call dis fader, when dat fader? Nick know fader and moder. Major no broder."

Notwithstanding the sensations that nearly pressed her to the earth, the tell-tale blood rushed to Maud's cheeks again at this allusion, and she bowed her face to her knees. The action gave her time to rally her faculties; and, catching a glimpse of the vast importance to all for her maintaining self-command, she was enabled to raise her face with something like the fortitude the Indian hoped to see.

"Trifle with me no longer, Wyandotté, but let me know the worst at once. Is my father dead? — By father, I mean Captain Willoughby?"

"Mean wrong, den — no fader, tell you. Why young squaw so much like Mohawk?"

"Man, is Captain Willoughby killed?"

Nick gazed intently into Maud's face for half a minute, and then he nodded an assent. Notwithstanding all her resolutions to be steady, our heroine nearly sank under the blow. For ten minutes she spoke not, but sat, her head bowed to her knees, in a confusion of thought that threatened a temporary loss of reason. Happily, a flood of tears relieved her, and she became more calm. Then the necessity of knowing more, in order that she might act intelligently, occurred to her mind, and she questioned Nick in a way to elicit all it suited the savage to reveal.

Maud's first impulse was to go out to meet the body of the captain, and to ascertain for herself that there was actually no longer any hope. Nick's account had been so laconic as to leave much obscurity, and the blow had been so sudden she could hardly credit the truth in its full extent. Still, there remained the dreadful tidings to be communicated to those dear beings, who, while they feared so much, had never anticipated a calamity like this. Even Mrs. Willoughby, sensitive as she was, and wrapped up in those she loved so entirely, as she was habitually, had been so long accustomed to see and know of her husband's exposing himself with impunity, as to begin to feel, if not to think,

that he bore a charmed life. All this customary confidence was to be overcome, and the truth was to be said. Tell the fact to her mother, Maud felt that she could not then; scarcely under any circumstances would she have consented to perform this melancholy office; but, so long as a shadow of doubt remained on the subject of her father's actual decease, it seemed cruel even to think of it. Her decision was to send for Beulah, and it was done by means of one of the negresses.

So long as we feel that there are others to be sustained by our fortitude, even the feeblest possess a firmness to which they might otherwise be strangers. Maud, contrary to what her delicate but active frame and sweetness of disposition might seem to indicate, was a young woman capable of the boldest exertions, short of taking human life. Her frontier training had raised her above most of the ordinary weaknesses of her sex; and, so far as determination went, few men were capable of higher resolution, when circumstances called for its display. Her plan was now made up to go forth and meet the body, and nothing short of a command from her mother could have stopped her. In this frame of mind was our heroine, when Beulah made her appearance.

"Maud!" exclaimed the youthful matron, "what has happened! — why are you so pale! — why send for me? Does Nick bring us any tidings from the mill?"

"The worst possible, Beulah. My father — my dear, dear father is hurt. They have borne him as far as the edge of the woods, where they have halted, in order not to take us by surprise. I am going to meet the — to meet the men, and to bring father in. You must prepare mother for the sad, sad tidings; yes, Beulah, for the worst, as everything depends on the wisdom and goodness of God!"

"Oh! Maud, this is dreadful!" exclaimed the sister, sinking into a chair. "What will become of mother — of little Evert — of us all!"

"The providence of the Ruler of heaven and earth will care for us. Kiss me, dear sister — how cold you are — rouse yourself, Beulah, for mother's sake. Think how

much more she must feel than we possibly can, and then be resolute."

"Yes, Maud — very true — no woman can feel like a wife unless it be a mother" —

Here Beulah's words were stopped by her fainting.

"You see, Smash," said Maud, pointing to her sister with a strange resolution, "she must have air, and a little water — and she has salts about her, I know. Come, Nick; we have no more time to waste — you must be my guide."

The Tuscarora had been a silent observer of this scene, and if it did not awaken remorse in his bosom, it roused feelings that had never before been its inmates. The sight of two such beings suffering under a blow that his own hand had struck, was novel to him, and he knew not which to encourage most, a sentiment allied to regret, or a fierce resentment, that any should dare thus to reproach, though it were only by yielding to the grief natural to their situation. But Maud had obtained a command over him that he knew not how to resist, and he followed her from the room, keeping his eyes riveted the while on the pallid face of Beulah. The last was recalled from her insensibility, however, in the course of a few minutes, through the practiced attentions of the negresses.

Maud waited for nothing. Motioning impatiently for the Tuscarora to lead the way, she glided after him with a rapidity that equaled his own loping movement. She made no difficulties in passing the stockade, though Nick kept his eyes on the laborers, and felt assured that their exit was not noticed. Once by the path that led along the rivulet Maud refused all precautions, but passed swiftly over it, partially concealed by its bushes. Her dress was dark, and left little liability to exposure. As for Nick, his forest attire, like the hunting-shirt of the whites, was expressly regulated by the wish to go to and fro unseen.

In less than three minutes after the Indian and Maud had passed the gate, they were drawing near to the melancholy group that had halted in the forest. Our heroine was recognized as she approached, and when she came rushing up to the spot, all made way, allowing her to fall

upon her knees by the side of the lifeless body, bathing the placid face of the dead with her tears, and covering it with kisses.

"Is there no hope! oh! Joyce," she cried, "can it be possible that my father is actually dead?"

"I fear, Miss Maud, that his honor has made his last march. He has received orders to go hence, and, like a gallant soldier as he was, he has obeyed, without a murmur," answered the sergeant, endeavoring to appear firm and soldier-like himself. "We have lost a noble and humane commander, and you a most excellent and tender father."

"No fader," growled Nick, at the sergeant's elbow, twitching his sleeve, at the same time, to attract attention. "Sergeant know her fader. He by; I by, when Iroquois shoot him."

"I do not understand you, Tuscarora, nor do I think you altogether understand us; the less you say, therefore, the better for all parties. It is our duty, Miss Maud, to say, 'God's will be done,' and the soldier who dies in the discharge of his duty is never to be pitied. I sincerely wish that the Rev. Mr. Woods was here; he would tell you all this in a manner that would admit of no dispute; as for myself, I am a plain man, Miss Maud, and my tongue cannot utter one half that my heart feels at this instant."

"Ah! Joyce, what a friend — what a parent has it pleased God to call to himself!"

"Yes, Miss Maud, that may be said with great justice — if his honor has left us in obedience to general orders, it is to meet promotion in a service that will never weary, and never end."

"So kind, so true, so gentle, so just, so affectionate!" said Maud, wringing her hands.

"And so brave, young lady. His honor Captain Willoughby wasn't one of them that is always talking, and writing, and boasting about fighting; but when anything was to be done, the colonel always knew whom to send on the duty. The army couldn't have lost a braver gentleman, had he remained in it."

"Oh! my father — my father!" cried Maud, in bitterness of sorrow, throwing herself on the body and embracing it, as had been her wont in childhood; "would that I could have died for you!"

"Why you let go on so!" grumbled Nick, again. "No her fader — you know dat, sergeant."

Joyce was not in a state to answer. His own feelings had been kept in subjection only by military pride, but they now had become so nearly uncontrollable, that he found himself obliged to step a little aside, in order to conceal his weakness. As it was, large tears trickled down his rugged face, like water flowing from the fissures of the riven oak. Jamie Allen's constitutional prudence, however, now became active, admonishing the party of the necessity of their getting within the protection of the Hut.

"Death is at a' times awfu'," said the mason, "but it must befall young and auld alike. And the affleection it brings cometh fra' the heart, and is a submission to the la' o' nature. Nevertheless we a' ha'e our duties, so lang as we remain in the flesh, and it is time to be thinking o' carryin' the body into some place o' safety, while we ha'e a prudent regard to our ain conditions also."

Maud had risen, and, hearing this appeal, she drew back meekly, assumed a manner of forced composure, and signed to the men to proceed. On this intimation, the body was raised, and the melancholy procession resumed its march.

For the purpose of concealment, Joyce led the way into the bed of the stream, leaving Maud waiting their movements, a little deeper within the forest. As soon as he and his fellow-bearers were in the water, Joyce turned and desired Nick to escort the young lady in, again, on dry land, or by the path along which she had come out. This said, the sergeant and his companions proceeded. Maud stood gazing on the sad spectacle like one entranced, until she felt a sleeve pulled, and perceived the Tuscarora at her side.

"No go to Hut," said Nick, earnestly; "go wid Wyandotté."

"Not follow my dear father's remains — not go to my

beloved mother in her anguish! You know not what you ask, Indian — move, and let me proceed."

"No go home — no use — no good. Cap'in dead — what do widout commander? Come wid Wyandotté — find major — den do some good."

Maud fairly started in her surprise. There seemed something so truly useful, so consoling, so dear in this proposal, that it instantly caught her ear.

"Find the major!" she answered. "Is that possible, Nick? My poor father perished in making that attempt; what hope can there be then for my success?"

"Plenty hope — much as want — all, want. Come widi Wyandotté; he great chief — show young squaw where to find broder."

Here was a touch of Nick's consummate art. He knew the female bosom so well that he avoided any allusion to his knowledge of the real relation between Robert Willoughby and Maud, though he had so recently urged her want of natural affinity to the family, as a reason why she should not grieve. By keeping the major before her eyes as a brother, the chances of his own success were greatly increased. As for Maud, a tumult of feeling came over her heart at this extraordinary proposal. To liberate Bob, to lead him into the Hut, to offer his manly protection to her mother, and Beulah, and little Evert, at such an instant, caught her imagination, and appealed to all her affections.

"Can you do this, Tuscarora?" she asked, earnestly, pressing her hand on her heart as if to quiet its throbbings. "Can you really lead me to Major Willoughby, so that I may have some hope of liberating him?"

"Sartain; you go, he come. I go, he no come. Don't love Nick; t'ink all Injin, one Injin — t'ink one Injin, all Injin. You go, he come — he stay, find more knife, and die like cap'in. Young squaw follow Wyandotté, and see."

Maud needed no more. To save the life of Bob, her well-beloved, he who had so long been beloved in secret, she would have gone with one far less known and trusted than the Tuscarora. She made an eager gesture for him to

proceed, and they were soon on their way to the mill, threading the mazes of the forest.

Nick was far from observing the precautions that had been taken by the captain, in his unfortunate march out. Acquainted with every inch of ground in the vicinity of the Dam, and an eye-witness of the dispositions of the invaders, he had no occasion for making the long *détour* already described, but went to work in a much more direct manner. Instead of circling the valley, and the clearing, to the westward, he turned short in the contrary direction, crossed the rivulet on the fallen tree, and led the way along the eastern margin of the flats. On this side of the valley he knew there were no enemies, and the position of the huts and barns enabled him to follow a path, that was just deep enough in the forest to conceal his movements. By taking this course, besides having the advantage of a clear and beaten path, most of the way, the Tuscarora brought the whole distance within a mile.

As for Maud, she asked no questions, solicited no pauses, manifested no physical weakness. Actively as the Indian moved among the trees, she kept close in his footsteps ; and she had scarcely begun to reflect on the real nature of the undertaking in which she was engaged, when the roar of the rivulet, and the formation of the land, told her they had reached the edge of the glen below the mills. Here Nick told her to remain stationary a moment, while he advanced to a covered point of the rocks, to reconnoitre. This was the place where the Indian had made his first observations of the invaders of the valley, ascertaining their real character before he trusted his person among them. On the present occasion, his object was to see if all remained, in and about the mills, as when he had last left the spot.

"Come," said Nick, signing for Maud to follow him; "we go — fools sleep, and eat, and talk. Major prisoner now ; half an hour, major free."

This was enough for the ardent, devoted, generous-hearted Maud. She descended the path before her as swiftly as her guide could lead, and, in five more minutes, they reached the bank of the stream, in the glen, at a point

where a curvature hid the rivulet from those at the mill. Here an enormous pine had been laid across the torrent, and, flattened on its surface, it made a secure bridge for those who were sure of foot, and steady of eye. Nick glanced back at his companion, as he stepped upon this bridge, to ascertain if she were equal to crossing it, a single glance sufficing to tell him apprehensions were unnecessary. Half a minute placed both, in safety, on the western bank.

"Good!" muttered the Indian; "young squaw make wife for warrior."

But Maud neither heard the compliment nor saw the expression of countenance which accompanied it. She merely made an impatient gesture to proceed. Nick gazed intently at the excited girl; and there was an instant when he seemed to waver in his own purpose; but the gesture repeated caused him to turn, and lead the way up the glen.

The progress of Nick now, necessarily, became more guarded and slower. He was soon obliged to quit the common path, and to incline to the left, more against the side of the cliff, for the purposes of concealment. From the time he had struck the simple bridge, until he took this precaution, his course had lain along what might have been termed the common highway, on which there was always the danger of meeting some messenger travelling to or from the valley.

But Nick was at no loss for paths. There were plenty of them; and the one he took soon brought him out into that by which Captain Willoughby had descended to the lean-to. When the spot was reached where Joyce had halted, Nick paused; and first listening intently to catch the sound of noises, if any might happen to be in dangerous proximity, he addressed his companion:

"Young squaw bold," he said, encouragingly; "now want heart of warrior."

"I can follow, Nick — having come so far, why distrust me, now?"

"Cause he here — down dere; woman love man — man

love woman — dat right; but, no show it, when scalp in danger."

"Perhaps I do not understand you, Tuscarora; but my trust is in God; He is a support that can uphold any weakness."

"Good! stay here — Nick come back in minute."

Nick now descended to the passage between the rocks and the lean-to, in order to make certain that the major still remained in his prison, before he incurred any unnecessary risk with Maud. Of this fact he was soon assured; after which he took the precaution to conceal the pool of blood, by covering it with earth and stones. Making his other observations with care, and placing the saw and chisel, with the other tools that had fallen from the captain's hand when he received his death-wound, in a position to be handy, he ascended the path and rejoined Maud. No word passed between our heroine and her guide. The latter motioned her to follow; then he led the way down to the cabin. Soon both had entered the narrow passage; and Maud, in obedience to a sign from her companion, seated herself on the precise spot where her father had been found, and where the knife had passed into his heart. To all this, however, Nick manifested the utmost indifference. Everything like ferocity had left his face; to use his own figurative language, his sores smarted no longer; and the expression of his eye was friendly and gentle. Still it showed no signs of compunction.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Her pallid face displayed
Something, methought, surpassing mortal beauty.
She presently turned round, and fixed her large wild eyes,
Brimming with tears, upon me, fetched a sigh,
As from a riven heart, and cried, "He's dead!"

HILLHOUSE.

MAUD had been so earnest and so much excited, that she scarcely reflected on the singularity and novelty of her situation, until she was seated, as described at the close of the last chapter. Then, indeed, she began to think that she had embarked in an undertaking of questionable prudence, and to wonder in what manner she was to be useful. Still her heart did not fail her, or her hopes altogether sink. She saw that Nick was grave and occupied, like a man who intended to effect his purpose at every hazard; and that purpose she firmly believed was the liberation of Robert Willoughby.

As for Nick, the instant his companion was seated, and he had got a position to his mind, he set about his business with great assiduity. It has been said that the lean-to, like the cabin, was built of logs; a fact that constituted the security of the prisoner. The logs of the lean-to, however, were much smaller than those of the body of the house, and both were of the common white pine of the country, a wood of durable qualities, used as it was here, but which yielded easily to edged tools. Nick had a small saw, a large chisel, and his knife. With the chisel he cautiously commenced opening a hole of communication with the interior, by removing a little of the mortar that filled the interstices between the logs. This occupied but a moment. When effected, Nick applied an eye to the hole, and took a look within. He muttered the word "Good," then with

drew his own eye, and, by a sign, invited Maud to apply one of hers. This our heroine did, and saw Robert Willoughby reading within a few feet of her, with a calmness of air that at once announced his utter ignorance of the dire event that had so lately occurred, almost within reach of his arm.

"Squaw speak," whispered Nick; "voice sweet as wren — go to major's ear like song of bird. Squaw speak music to young warrior."

Maud drew back, her heart beat violently, her breathing became difficult, and the blood rushed to her temples. But an earnest motion from Nick reminded her this was no time for hesitation, and she applied her mouth to the hole.

"Robert — dear Robert," she said, in a loud whisper, "we are here — have come to release you."

Maud's impatience could wait no longer; but her eye immediately succeeded her mouth. That she was heard was evident from the circumstance that the book fell from the major's hand, in a way to show how completely he was taken by surprise. "He knows even my whispers," thought Maud, her heart beating still more violently, as she observed the young soldier gazing around him, with a bewildered air, like one who fancied he had heard the whisperings of some ministering angel. By this time Nick had removed a long piece of the mortar; and he too was looking into the buttery. By way of bringing matters to an understanding, the Indian thrust the chisel through the opening, and moving it, he soon attracted Willoughby's attention. The latter instantly advanced, and applied his own eye to the wide crack, catching a view of the swarthy face of Nick.

Willoughby knew that the presence of this Indian at such a place, and under such circumstances, indicated the necessity of caution. He did not speak, therefore; but first making a significant gesture towards the door of his narrow prison, thus intimating the close proximity of sentinels, he demanded the object of this visit, in a whisper.

"Come to set major free," answered Nick.

"Can I trust you, Tuscarora? Sometimes you seem a

friend, sometimes an enemy. I know that you appear t be on good terms with my captors."

"Dat good — Injin know how to look two way — war rior must, if great warrior."

"I wish I had some proof, Nick, that you are dealin with me in good faith."

"Call dat proof, den!" growled the savage, seizin Maud's little hand, and passing it through the opening, be fore the startled girl was fully aware of what he mean to do.

Willoughby knew the hand at a glance. He would hav recognized it in that forest solitude by its symmetry an whiteness, its delicacy and fullness; but one of the tape fingers wore a ring that, of late, Maud had much usec being a diamond hoop that she had learned was a favorit ornament of her real mother's. It was not surprising therefore, that he seized the pledge that was thus strangel held forth and had covered it with kisses, before Maud ha sufficient presence of mind or strength to reclaim it. Thi she would not do, however, at such a moment, without re turning all the proofs of ardent affection that were lavishe on her own hand, by giving a gentle pressure to the one i which it was clasped.

"This is so strange, Maud! — so every way extraord nary, that I know not what to think," the young man whis pered, soon as he could get a glimpse of the face of th sweet girl. "Why are you here, beloved, and in suc company?"

"You will trust me, Bob — Nick comes as your frien Aid him all you can, now, and be silent. When free, the will be the time to learn all."

A sign of assent succeeded, and the major withdrew step in order to ascertain the course Nick meant to pursu By this time the Indian was at work with his knife, and h soon passed the chisel in to the prisoner, who seized it, an commenced cutting into the logs at a point opposite to tha where the Tuscarora was whittling away the wood. Th object was to introduce the saw, and it required some labo to effect such a purpose. By dint of application, howeve

and by cutting the log above as well as that below, sufficient space was obtained in the course of a few minutes. Nick then passed the saw in through the opening, it exceeding his skill to use such a tool with readiness.

By this time Willoughby was engaged with the earnestness and zeal of the captive who catches a glimpse of liberty. Notwithstanding, he proceeded intelligently and with caution. The blanket given him by his captors as a pallet, was hanging from a nail, and he took the precaution to draw this nail, and to place it above the spot selected for the cut, that he might suspend the blanket so as to conceal what he was at in the event of a visit from without. When all was ready, and the blanket was properly placed, he began to make long heavy strokes with the tool, in a way to deaden the sound. This was a delicate operation; but the work's being done behind the blanket, had some effect in lessening the noise. As the work proceeded, Willoughby's hopes increased; and he was soon delighted to hear from Nick that it was time to insert the saw in another place. Success is apt to induce carelessness; and as the task proceeded, Willoughby's arm worked with greater rapidity, until a noise at the door gave the startling information that he was about to be visited. There was just time to finish the last cut, and to let the blanket fall, before the door opened. The saw-dust and chips had all been carefully removed as the work proceeded, and of these none were left to betray the secret.

There might have been a quarter of a minute between the moment when Willoughby seated himself, with his book in his hand, and that in which the door opened. Short as was this interval, it sufficed for Nick to remove the piece of log last cut, and to take away the handle of the saw; the latter change permitting the blanket to hang so close against the logs as completely to conceal the hole. The sentinel who appeared was an Indian in externals, but a dull, white countryman in fact and character.

"I thought I heard the sound of a saw, major," he said, listlessly; "yet everything looks quiet, and in its place here!"

"Where should I get such a tool?" Willoughby cool replied; "and what is there here to saw?"

"'Twas as nat'ral, too, as the carpenter himself cou make it, in sound!"

"Possibly the mill has been set in motion by some your idlers, and you have heard the large saw, which, at distance, may sound like a smaller one near by."

The man looked incredulously at his prisoner for a m ment; then he drew to the door, with the air of one w was determined to assure himself of the truth, calli aloud, as he did so, to one of his companions to join hi Willoughby knew that no time was to be lost. In half minute, he had passed the hole, dropped the blanket bef it, had circled the slender waist of Maud with one ar and was shoving aside the bushes with the other, as he f lowed Nick from the straitened passage between the lean- and the rock. The major seemed more bent on beari Maud from the spot than on saving himself. Her f scarce touched the ground as he ascended to the pla where Joyce had halted. Here Nick stood an instant, wi a finger raised in intense listening. His practiced ea caught the sound of voices in the lean-to, then scarce fi feet distant. Men called to each other by name, and th a voice directly beneath them, proclaimed that a head w already thrust through the hole.

"Here is your saw, and here is its workmanship!" e claimed this voice.

"And here is blood, too," said another. "See! t ground has been a pool beneath those stones."

Maud shuddered, as if the soul were leaving its earth tenement, and Willoughby signed impatiently for Nick proceed. But the savage, for a brief instant, seemed b wildered. The danger below, however, increased, a evidently drew so near that he turned and glided up t ascent. Presently, the fugitives reached the descendi path, that diverged from the larger one they were on, a by which Nick and Maud had so recently come diagona up this cliff. Nick leaped into it, and then the interve ing bushes concealed their persons from any who mig

continue on the upward course. There was an open space, however, a little lower down; and the quick-witted savage came to a stand under a close cover, believing flight to be useless should their pursuers actually follow on their heels.

The halt had not been made half a dozen seconds, when the voices of the party ascending in chase were heard above the fugitives. Willoughby felt an impulse to dash down the path, bearing Maud in his arms, but Nick interposed his own body to so rash a movement. There was not time for a discussion, and the sounds of voices, speaking English too distinctly to pass for any but those of men of English birth, or English origin, were heard disputing about the course to be taken, at the point of junction between the two paths.

"Go by the lower," called out one from the rear; "he will run down the stream, and make for the settlements on the Hudson. Once before he has done this, as I know from Strides himself."

"D——n Strides!" answered another, more in front. "He is a sniveling scoundrel, who loves liberty as a hog loves corn, for the sake of good living. I say go the upper, which will carry him on the heights, and bring him out near his father's garrison."

"Here are marks of feet on the upper," observed a third, "though they seem to be coming down, instead of going up the hill."

"It is the trail of the fellows who have helped him to escape. Push up the hill, and we shall have them all in ten minutes. Push up — push up!"

This decided the matter. It appeared to Willoughby that at least a dozen men ran up the path, above his head, eager in the pursuit, and anticipating success. Nick waited no longer, but glided down the cliff, and was soon in the broad path which led along the margin of the stream, and was the ordinary thoroughfare in going to or from the Knoll. Here the fugitives, as on the advance, were exposed to the danger of accidental meetings; but fortunately no one was met or seen, and the bridge was

passed in safety. Turning short to the north, Nick plunge into the woods again, following the cow-path by which had so recently descended to the glen. No pause w made even here. Willoughby had an arm round th waist of Maud, and bore her forward with a rapidity which her own strength was altogether unequal. In le than ten minutes from the time the prisoner had escape the fugitives reached the level of the rock of the wate fall, or that of the plain of the Dam. As it was reaso ably certain that none of the invaders had passed to th side of the valley, haste was no longer necessary, a Maud was permitted to pause for breath.

The halt was short, however, our heroine, herself, no feeling as if the major could not be secure until he w fairly within the palisades. In vain did Willoughby t to pacify her fears and to assure her of his comparati safety; Maud's nerves were excited, and then she had th dreadful tidings, which still remained to be told, pressi upon her spirits, and quickening all her natural impuls and sentiments.

Nick soon made the signal to proceed, and then th three began to circle the flats, as mentioned in the a vance of Maud and her companion. When they reache a favorable spot, the Indian once more directed a hal intimating his own intention to move to the margin of th woods, in order to reconnoitre. Both his companions hea this announcement with satisfaction, for Willoughby wa eager to say to Maud directly that which he had s plainly indicated by means of the box, and to extort fro her a confession that she was not offended; while Mau herself felt the necessity of letting the major know th melancholy circumstance that yet remained to be tol With these widely distinct feelings uppermost our tw lovers saw Nick quit them, each impatient, restless, a uneasy.

Willoughby had found a seat for Maud on a log, a he now placed himself at her side, and took her han pressing it silently to his heart.

"Nick has, then, been a true man, dearest Maud,"

said, "notwithstanding all my doubts and misgivings of him."

"Yes; he gave me to understand you would hardly trust him, and that was the reason I was induced to accompany him. We both thought, Bob, you would confide in me!"

"Bless you, bless you, beloved Maud; but have you seen Mike; has he had any interview with you; in a word, did he deliver you my box?"

Maud's feelings had been so much excited that the declaration of Willoughby's love, precious as it was to her heart, failed to produce the outward signs that are usually exhibited by the delicate and sensitive of her sex, when they listen to the insinuating language for the first time. Her thoughts were engrossed with her dreadful secret, and with the best and least shocking means of breaking it to the major. The tint on her cheek, therefore, scarce deepened, as this question was put to her, while her eye, full of earnest tenderness, still remained riveted on the face of her companion.

"I have seen Mike, dear Bob," she answered, with a steadiness that had its rise in her singleness of purpose, "and he has shown me — given me, the box."

"But have you understood me, Maud? You will remember that box contained the great secret of my life!"

"This I well remember; yes, the box contains the great secret of your life."

"But — you cannot have understood me, Maud, else would you not look so unconcerned — so vacantly; I am not understood, and am miserable!"

"No, no, no," interrupted Maud, hurriedly, "I understand all you have wished to say, and you have no cause to be" — Maud's voice became choked, for she recollected the force of the blow that she had in reserve.

"This is so strange! — altogether so unlike your usual manner, Maud, that there must be some mistake. The box contained nothing but your own hair, dearest."

"Yes; nothing else. It was my hair; I knew it the instant I saw it."

"And did it tell you no secret? Why was Beulah hair not with it? Why did I cherish your hair, Mau and yours alone? You have not understood me!"

"I have, dear, dear Bob! You love me — you wishe to say we are not brother and sister, in truth; that w have an affection that is far stronger — one that will bin us together for life. Do not look so wretched, Bob; understand everything you wish to say."

"This is so very extraordinary — so unlike yoursel Maud, I know not what to make of it! I sent you tha box, beloved one, to say that you had my whole heart that I thought of you day and night; that you were th great object of my existence, and that, while misery woul be certain without you, felicity would be just as certai with you; in a word, that I love you, Maud, and ca never love another."

"Yes, so I understood you, Bob." Maud, spite of he concentration of feeling on the dreadful secret, could no refrain from blushing. "It was too plain to be mis taken."

"And how was my declaration received? Tell me a once, dear girl, with your usual truth of character, an frankness — can you, will you love me in return?"

This was a home question, and, on another occasion, i might have produced a scene of embarrassment and hesita tion. But Maud was delighted with the idea that it wa in her power to break the violence of the blow she wa about to inflict, by setting Robert Willoughby's mind a ease on this great point.

"I do love you, Bob" — she said, with fervent affec tion beaming in every lineament of her angel face — "have loved you, for years; how could it be otherwise I have scarce seen any other to love; and how see you and refrain?"

"Blessed, blessed Maud; but this is so strange — I fea you do not understand me; I am not speaking of such affection as Beulah bears me, as brother and sister feel; speak of the love that my mother bore my father — o the love of man and wife" —

A groan from Maud stopped the vehement young man, who received his companion in his arms, as she bowed her head on his bosom, half fainting.

"Is this resentment, dearest, or is it consent?" he asked, bewildered by all that passed.

"Oh! Bob — father — father — father!"

"My father! — what of him, Maud? Why has the allusion to him brought you to this state!"

"They have killed him, dearest, dearest Bob; and you must now be father, husband, brother, son, all in one. We have no one left but you!"

A long pause succeeded. The shock was terrible to Robert Willoughby, but he bore up against it like a man. Maud's incoherent and unnatural manner was now explained, and while unutterable tenderness of manner — a tenderness that was increased by what had just passed — was exhibited by each to the other, no more was said of love. A common grief appeared to bind their hearts closer together, but it was unnecessary to dwell on their mutual affection in words. Robert Willoughby's sorrow mingled with that of Maud, and, as he folded her to his heart, their faces were literally bathed in each other's tears.

It was some time before Willoughby could ask, or Maud give, an explanation. Then the latter briefly recounted all she knew, her companion listening with the closest attention. The son thought the occurrence as extraordinary as it was afflicting, but there was not leisure for inquiry.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for our lovers that Nick's employment kept him away. For nearly ten minutes longer did he continue absent; then he returned, slowly, thoughtful, and possibly a little disturbed. At the sound of his footstep, Willoughby released Maud from his arms, and both assumed an air of as much tranquillity as the state of their feelings would allow.

"Better march," said Nick, in his sententious manner, "Mohawk very mad."

"Do you see the signs of this?" asked the major, scarce knowing what he said.

"Always make Injin mad, lose scalp. Prisoner ru away, carry scalp with him."

"I rather think, Nick, you do my captors injustice; s far from desiring anything so cruel, they treated me wel enough, considering the circumstances, and that we are i the woods."

"Yes; spare scalp, 'cause t'ink rope ready Nebbe trust Mohawk — all bad Injin."

To own the truth, one of the great failings of the savage of the American forests, was to think of the neighborin tribes, as the Englishman is known to think of the French man, and *vice versâ;* as the German thinks of both, and al think of the Yankee. In a word, his own tribe contain everything that is excellent, with the Pawnee, the Osage and Pottawattomie, as Paris contains all that is perfect i the eyes of the *bourgeois*, London in those of the cockney and this virtuous republic in those of its own enlightene citizens; while the hostile communities are remorselessly given up to the tender solicitude of those beings which lea nations, as well as individuals, into the sinks of perdition Thus Nick, liberalized as his mind had comparatively be come by intercourse with the whites, still retained enough of the impressions of childhood, to put the worst construc tion on the acts of all his competitors, and the best on his own. In this spirit, then, he warned his companions agains placing any reliance on the mercy of the Mohawks.

Major Willoughby, however, had now sufficient induce ments to move, without reference to the hostile intentions of his late captors. That his escape would excite a malig nant desire for vengeance, he could easily believe; but his mother, his revered, heart-broken mother, and the patient afflicted Beulah, were constantly before him, and gladly did he press on, Maud leaning on his arm, the instant Nick led the way. To say that the lovely, confiding being who clung to his side, as the vine inclines to the tree, was forgotten, or that he did not retain a vivid recollection of all that she had so ingenuously avowed in his favor, would not be rigidly accurate, though the hopes thus created shone in the dis tance, under the present causes of grief, as the sun's rays

illumine the depths of the heavens, while his immediate face is entirely hidden by an eclipse.

"Did you see any signs of a movement against the house, Nick?" demanded the major, when the three had been busily making their way, for several minutes, round the margin of the forest.

The Tuscarora turned, nodded his head, and glanced at Maud.

"Speak frankly, Wyandotté" —

"Good!" interrupted the Indian with emphasis, assuming a dignity of manner the major had never before witnessed. "Wyandotté come — Nick gone away altogether. Nebber see Sassy Nick, ag'in, at Dam."

"I am glad to hear this, Tuscarora, and as Maud says, you may speak plainly."

"T'ink, den, best be ready. Mohawk feel worse dan if he lose ten, t'ree, six scalp. Injin know Injin feelin'. Pale-face can't stop red-skin, when blood get up."

"Press on, then, Wyandotté, for the sake of God — let me, at least, die in defense of my beloved mother!"

"Moder; good! — doctor Tuscarora, when death grin in face! She my moder, too!"

This was said energetically, and in a manner to assure his listeners that they had a firm ally in this warlike savage. Little did either dream, at that instant, that this same wayward being — the creature of passion, and the fierce avenger of all his own fancied griefs, was the cause of the dreadful blow that had so recently fallen on them.

The sun still wanted an hour of setting, when Nick brought his companions to the fallen tree, by which they were again to cross the rivulet. Here he paused, pointing to the roofs of the Hut, which were then just visible through the trees; as much as to say that his duty, as a guide, was done.

"Thank you, Wyandotté," said Willoughby; "if it be the will of God to carry us safely through the crisis, you shall be well rewarded for this service."

"Wyandotté chief — want no dollar. Been Injin runner — now be Injin warrior. Major follow — squaw follow — Mohawk in hurry."

This was enough. Nick passed out of the forest on t swift walk — but for the female, it would have been his cu tomary loping trot — followed by Willoughby; his arr again, circling the waist of Maud, whom he bore alon scarce permitting her light form to touch the earth. A this instant four or five conchs sounded in the direction o the mills and along the western margin of the meadow Blast seemed to echo blast; then the infernal yell, know as the war-whoop, was heard all along the opposite face o the buildings. Judging from the sounds, the meadows we alive with assailants, pressing on for the palisades.

At this appalling moment, Joyce appeared on the ridg of the roof, shouting, in a voice that might have been hear to the farthest point in the valley, —

"Stand to your arms, my men," he cried; "here th scoundrels come; hold your fire until they attempt to cro the stockade."

To own the truth, there was a little bravado in this, mi gled with the stern courage that habit and nature had bot contributed to lend the sergeant. The veteran knew th feebleness of his garrison, and fancied that warlike crie from himself, might counterbalance the yells that were no rising from all the fields in front of the house.

As for Nick and the major, they pressed forward, to earnest and excited to speak. The former measured th distance by his ear, and thought there was still time to ga a cover, if no moment was lost. To reach the foot of th cliff, took just a minute; to ascend to the hole in the pa sade, half as much time; and to pass it, a quarter. Mau was dragged ahead, as much as she ran; and the perio when the three were passing swiftly round to the gate w pregnant with imminent risk. They were seen, and fif rifles were discharged, as it might be, at a command. Th bullets pattered against the logs of the Hut, and against th palisades, but no one was hurt. The voice of Willoughb opened the gate, and the next instant the three were with the shelter of the court.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

They have not perished — no!
Kind words, remembered voices, once so sweet,
Smiles, radiant long ago,
And features, the great soul's apparent seat;

All shall come back, each tie
Of pure affection shall be knit again;
Alone shall evil die,
And sorrow dwell a prisoner in thy reign.

And then shall I behold
Him, by whose kind paternal side I sprung,
And her who, still and cold,
Fills the next grave — the beautiful and young.

BRYANT'S PAST.

THE scene that followed passed like a hurricane sweeping over the valley. Joyce had remained on the ridge of the roof, animating his little garrison, and endeavoring to intimidate his enemies, to the last moment. The volley of bullets had reached the palisades and the buildings, and he was still unharmed. But the sound of the major's voice below, and the cry that Miss Maud and Nick were at the gate, produced a sudden change in all his dispositions for the defense. The sergeant ran below himself to report and receive his orders from the new commander, while all the negroes, females as well as males, rushed down into the court, to meet their young master and mistress.

It is not easy to describe the minute that succeeded, after Willoughby and Maud were surrounded by the blacks. The delight of these untutored beings was in proportion to their recent sorrow. The death of their master, and the captivity of Master Bob and Miss Maud, had appeared to them like a general downfall of the family of Willoughby; but here was a revival of its hopes, that came as unexpectedly as its previous calamities. Amid the clamor, cries,

tears, lamentations, and bursts of uncontrollable deligh Joyce could scarce find a moment in which to discharge h duty.

"I see how it is, sergeant," exclaimed Willoughby; "th assault is now making, and you desire orders."

"There is not an instant to lose, Major Willoughby; th enemy are at the palisades already, and there is no one a his station but Jamie and young Blodget."

"To your posts, men — to your posts, everybody. Th house shall be made good at all hazards. For God's sak Joyce, give me arms. I feel that my father's wrongs are t be revenged."

"Robert — dear, dear Robert," said Maud, throwing he arms on his shoulders, "this is no moment for such bitte feelings. Defend us, as I know you will, but defend us lik a Christian."

One kiss was all that the time allowed, and Maud rushe into the house to seek her mother and Beulah, feeling as if the tidings of Bob's return might prove some little allevia tion to the dreadful blow under which they must be suffering

As for Willoughby, he had no time for pious efforts a consolation. The Hut was to be made good against a hos of enemies; and the cracking of rifles from the staging an the fields announced that the conflict had begun in earnest Joyce handed him a rifle, and together they ascended rapidly to the roofs. Here they found Jamie Allen and Blodget loading and firing as fast as they could, and were soon joined by all the negroes. Seven men were now collected on the staging, and placing three in front, and two on each wing the major's dispositions were made; moving himself inces santly to whatever point circumstances called. Mike, who knew little of the use of fire-arms, was stationed at the gate as porter and warder.

It was so unusual a thing for savages to attack by day light, unless they could resort to surprise, that the assailants were themselves a little confused. The assault was made under a sudden feeling of resentment at the escape of the prisoner, and contrary to the wishes of the principal white men in the party, though the latter were dragged in the

train of events, and had to seem to countenance that of which they really disapproved. These sudden outbreakings were sufficiently common in Indian warfare, and often produced memorable disasters. On the present occasion, however, the most that could occur was a repulse, and to this the leaders, demagogues who owed their authority to the excesses and necessities of the times, were fain to submit, should it happen.

The onset had been fierce and too unguarded. The moment the volley was fired at the major, the assailants broke cover, and the fields were alive with men. This was the instant when the defense was left to Allen and Blodget, else might the exposure have cost the enemy dear. As it was, the last brought down one of the boldest of the Indians, while the mason fired with good will, though with less visible effect. The yell that followed this demonstration of the apparent force of the garrison, was a wild mixture of anger and exultation, and the rush at the palisades was general and swift. As Willoughby posted his reinforcement, the stockade was alive with men, some ascending, some firing from its summit, some aiding others to climb, and one falling within the inclosure, a second victim to Blodget's unerring aim.

The volley that now came from the roofs staggered the savages, most of whom fell outward, and sought cover in their usual quick and dexterous manner. Three or four, however, thought it safer to fall within the palisades, seeking safety immediately under the sides of the buildings. The view of these men, who were perfectly safe from the fire of the garrison so long as the latter made no sortie, gave an idea to those without, and produced, what had hitherto been wanting, something like order and concert in the attack. The firing now became desultory and watchful on both sides, the attacking party keeping themselves cov ered by the trees and fences as well as they could, while the garrison only peered above the ridge of the roof, as occasions required.

The instant the outbreak occurred all the *ci-devant* dependents of Captain Willoughby, who had deserted, aban-

doned their various occupations in the woods and fields, collecting in and around the cabins, in the midst of their wives and children. Joel alone was not to be seen. He had sought his friends among the leaders of the party, behind a stack of hay, at a respectful distance from the house, and to which there was a safe approach by means of the rivulet and its fringe of bushes. The little council that was held at this spot took place just as the half dozen assailants who had fallen within the palisades were seen clustering along under the walls of the buildings.

"Natur' gives you a hint how to conduct," observed Joel, pointing out this circumstance to his principal companions, as they all lay peering over the upper portions of the stack, at the hut. "You see them men under the eaves — they're a plaguy sight safer up there, than we be down here; and if 'twern't for the look of the thing, I wish I was with 'em. That house will never be taken without a desperate sight of fightin'; for the captain is an old warrior, and seems to like to snuff gunpowder" — the reader will understand none knew of the veteran's death but those in the house — "and won't be for givin' up while he has a charge left. If I had twenty men — no, thirty would be better, where these fellows be, I think the place could be carried in a few minutes, and then liberty would get its rights, and your monarchy-men would be put down as they all desarve."

"What do then?" demanded the leading Mohawk, in his abrupt, guttural English. "No shoot — can't kill log."

"No, chief, that's reasonable, an' ongainsayable, too; but only one half the inner gate is hung, and I've contrived matters so, on purpose, that the props of the half that isn't on the hinges can be undone, all the same as onlatching the door. If I only had the right man here now, the business should be done, and that speedily."

"Go 'self," answered the Mohawk, not without an expression of distrust and contempt.

"Every man to his callin', chief. My trade is peace, and politics, and liberty, while yours is war. Howsever, I can put you, and them that likes fightin', on the trail, and then we'll see how matters can be done. Mortality! How

them desperate devils on the roof do keep blazin' away! It wouldn't surprise me if they shot somebody, or got hurt themselves!"

Such were the deliberations of Joel Strides on a battle. The Indian leaders, however, gave some of their ordinary signals, to bring their "young men" more under command, and, sending messengers with orders in different directions, they left the haystack, compelling Joel to accompany them.

The results of these movements were soon apparent. The most daring of the Mohawks made their way into the rivulet, north of the buildings, and were soon at the foot of the cliff. A little reconnoitering told them that the hole which Joel had pointed out, had not been closed since the entrance of Willoughby and his companions. Led by their chief, the warriors stole up the ascent, and began to crawl through the same inlet which had served as an outlet to so many deserters, the previous night, accompanied by their wives and children.

The Indians in front had been ordered to occupy the attention of the garrison, while this movement was in the course of execution. At a signal, they raised a yell, unmasked them, fired one volley, and seemed to make another rush at the works. This was the instant chosen for the passage of the hole, and the seven leading savages effected their entrance within the stockade, with safety. The eighth man was shot by Blodget, in the hole itself. The body was instantly withdrawn by the legs, and all in the rear fell back under the cover of the cliff.

Willoughby now understood the character of the assault. Stationing Joyce with a party to command the hole, he went himself into the library, accompanied by Jamie and Blodget, using a necessary degree of caution. Fortunately the windows were raised, and a sudden volley routed all the Indians who had taken shelter beneath the rocks. These men, however, fled no farther than the rivulet, where they rallied under cover of the bushes, keeping up a dropping fire at the windows. For several minutes, the combat was confined to this spot; Willoughby, by often shifting from

window to window along the rear of the house, getting several volleys that told, at the men under the cover.

As yet, all the loss had been on the side of the assailants, though several of the garrison, including both Willoughby and Joyce, had divers exceedingly narrow escapes. Quite a dozen of the assailants had suffered, though only four were killed outright. By this time, the assault had lasted an hour, and the shades of evening were closing around the place. Daniel, the miller, had been sent by Joel to spring the mine they had prepared together, but, making the mistake usual with the uninitiated, he had hung back, to let others pass the hole first, and was consequently carried down in the crowd, within the cover of the bushes of the rivulet.

Willoughby had a short consultation with Joyce, and then he set seriously about the preparations necessary for a night defense. By a little management, and some personal risk, the bullet-proof shutters of the north wing of the Hut were all closed, rendering the rear of the buildings virtually impregnable. When this was done, and the gates of the area were surely shut, the place was like a ship in a gale, under short canvas and hove-to. The enemy within the palisades were powerless, to all appearance, the walls of stone preventing anything like an application of fire. Of the last, however, there was a little danger on the roof, the Indians frequently using arrows for this purpose, and water was placed on the staging in readiness to be used on occasion.

All these preparations occupied some time, and it was quite dark ere they were completed. Then Willoughby had a moment for reflection; the firing having entirely ceased and nothing further remaining to do.

"We are safe for the present, Joyce," the major observed as he and the sergeant stood together on the staging, after having consulted on the present aspect of things; "and I have a solemn duty yet to perform — my dear mother — and the body of my father" —

"Yes, sir; I would not speak of either, so long as it was your honor's pleasure to remain silent on the subject. Madam Willoughby is sorely cut down, as you may imagine

sir; and, as for my gallant old commander, he died in his harness, as a soldier should."

"Where have you taken the body? — has my mother seen it?"

"Lord bless you, sir, Madam Willoughby had his honor carried into her own room, and there she and Miss Beulah" — so all of the Hut still called the wife of Evert Beekman — "she and Miss Beulah kneel, and pray, and weep, as you know, sir, ladies will, whenever anything severe comes over their feelings; God bless them both, we all say, and think, aye, and pray, too, in our turns, sir."

"Very well, Joyce. Even a soldier may drop a tear over the dead body of his own father. God only knows what this night will bring forth, and I may never have a moment as favorable as this, for discharging so solemn a duty."

"Yes, your honor" — Joyce fancied that the major had succeeded to this appellation by the decease of the captain — "yes, your honor, the commandments, that the Rev. Mr. Woods used to read to us of a Sunday, tell us all about that; and it is quite as much the duty of a Christian to mind the commandments, I do suppose, as it is for a soldier to obey orders. God bless you, sir, and carry you safe through the affair. I had a touch of it with Miss Maud, myself, and know what it is. It's bad enough to lose an old commander in so sudden a way like, without having to feel what has happened in company with so sweet ladies, as these we have in the house. As for these blackguards down inside the works, let them give you no uneasiness; it will be light work for us to keep them busy, compared to what your honor has to do."

It would seem by the saddened manner in which Willoughby moved away, that he was of the same way of thinking as the sergeant, on this melancholy subject. The moment, however, was favorable for the object, and delay could not be afforded. Then Willoughby's disposition was to console his mother, even while he wept with her over the dead body of him they had lost.

Notwithstanding the wild uproar that had so prevailed, not only without, but within the place, the portion of the

house that was occupied by the widowed matron and her daughters, was silent as the grave. All the domestics were either on the staging, or at the loops, leaving the kitchens and offices deserted. The major first entered a little antechamber, that opened between a store-room, and the apartment usually occupied by his mother; this being the ordinary means of approach to her room. Here he paused, and listened quite a minute, in the hope of catching some sound from within that might prepare him for the scene he was to meet. Not a whisper, a moan, or a sob could be heard; and he ventured to tap lightly at the door. This was unheeded; waiting another minute, as much in dread as in respect, he raised the latch with some such awe as one would enter into a tomb of some beloved one. A single lamp let him into the secrets of this solemn place.

In the centre of the room lay, stretched on a large table, the manly form of the author of his being. The face was uppermost, and the limbs had been laid in decent order, as is usual with the dead that have been cared for. No change had been made in the dress, however, the captain lying in the hunting-shirt in which he had sallied forth; the crimson tint which disfigured one breast having been sedulously concealed by the attention of Great Smash. The passage from life to eternity had been so sudden, as to leave the usual benignant expression on the countenance of the corpse; the paleness which had succeeded the fresh, ruddy tint of nature, alone denoting that the sleep was not a sweet repose, but that of death.

The body of his father was the first object that met the gaze of the major. He advanced, leaned forward, kissed the marble-like forehead with reverence, and groaned in the effort to suppress an unmanly outbreaking of sorrow. Then he turned to seek the other well-beloved faces. There sat Beulah, in a corner of the room, as if to seek shelter for her infant, folding that infant to her heart, keeping her look riveted, in anguish, on the inanimate form that she had ever loved beyond a daughter's love. Even the presence of her brother scarce drew a glance away from the sad spectacle; though, when it at length did, the youthful

matron bowed her face down to that of her child, and wept convulsively. She was nearest to the major, who moved to her side, and kissed the back of her neck, with kind affection. The meaning was understood; and Beulah, while unable to look up, extended a hand to meet the fraternal pressure it received.

Maud was near, kneeling at the side of the bed. Her whole attitude denoted the abstraction of a mind absorbed in worship and solicitation. Though Willoughby's heart yearned to raise her in his arms, to console her, and bid her lean on himself, in future, for her earthly support, he too much respected her present occupation, to break in upon it with any irreverent zeal of his own. His eye turned from this loved object, therefore, and hurriedly looked for his mother.

The form of Mrs. Willoughby had escaped the first glances of her son, in consequence of the position in which she had placed herself. The stricken wife was in a corner of the room, her person partly concealed by the drapery of a window-curtain; though this was evidently more the effect of accident than of design. Willoughby started, as he caught the first glance of his beloved parent's face; and he felt a chill pass over his whole frame. There she sat upright, motionless, tearless, without any of the alleviating weaknesses of a less withering grief, her mild countenance exposed to the light of the lamp, and her eyes riveted on the face of the dead. In this posture had she remained for hours; no tender cares on the part of her daughters; no attentions from her domestics; no outbreaking of her own sorrows, producing any change. Even the clamor of the assault had passed by her like the idle wind.

"My mother — my poor — dear — heart-broken mother!" burst from Willoughby, at this sight, and he stepped quickly forward, and knelt at her feet.

But Bob — the darling Bob — his mother's pride and joy, was unheeded. The heart, which had so long beaten for others only; which never seemed to feel a wish, or a pulsation, but in the service of the objects of its affection, was not sufficiently firm to withstand the blow that had lighted

on it so suddenly. Enough of life remained, however, to support the frame for a while; and the will still exercised its power over the mere animal functions. Her son shut out the view of the body, and she motioned him aside with an impatience of manner he had never before witnessed from the same quarter. Inexpressibly shocked, the major took her hands, by gentle compulsion, covering them with kisses, and literally bathing them in tears.

"Oh! mother — dearest, dearest mother!" he cried, "will you not — do you not know me — Robert — Bob — your much-indulged, grateful, affectionate son? If father is gone into the immediate presence of the God he revered and served, I am still left to be a support to your declining years. Lean on me, mother, next to your Father in heaven."

"Will he ever get up, Robert?" whispered the widowed mother. "You speak too loud, and may rouse him before his time. He promised me to bring you back; and he ever kept his promises. He had a long march, and is weary See how sweetly he sleeps!"

Robert Willoughby bowed his head to his mother's knees, and groaned aloud. When he raised his face again, he saw the arms of Maud elevated towards heaven, as if she would pluck down that consolation for her mother, that her spirit was so fervently asking of the Almighty. Then he gazed into the face of his mother again; hoping to catch a gleam of some expression and recognition, that denoted more of reason. It was in vain; the usual placidity, the usual mild affection were there; but both were blended with the unnatural halo of a mind excited to disease, if not to madness. A slight exclamation, which sounded like alarm, came from Beulah; and turning towards his sister, Willoughby saw that she was clasping Evert still closer to her bosom, with her eyes now bent on the door. Looking in the direction of the latter, he perceived that Nick had stealthily entered the room.

The unexpected appearance of Wyandotté might well alarm the youthful mother. He had applied his war-paint since entering the Hut; and this, though it indicated an in-

tention to fight in defense of the house, left a picture of startling aspect. There was nothing hostile intended by this visit, however. Nick had come not only in amity, but in a kind concern to see after the females of the family, who had ever stood high in his friendship, notwithstanding the tremendous blow he had struck against their happiness. But he had been accustomed to see those close distinctions drawn between individuals and colors; and, the other proprieties admitted, would not have hesitated about consoling the widow with the offer of his own hand. Major Willoughby, understanding, from the manner of the Indian, the object of his visit, suffered him to pursue his own course, in the hope it might rouse his mother to a better consciousness of objects around her.

Nick walked calmly up to the table, and gazed at the face of his victim with a coldness that proved he felt no compunction. Still he hesitated about touching the body, actually raising his hand, as if with that intent, and then withdrawing it, like one stung by conscience. Willoughby noted the act; and, for the first time, a shadowy suspicion glanced on his mind. Maud had told him all she knew of the manner of his father's death, and old distrusts began to revive, though so faintly as to produce no immediate results.

As for the Indian, the hesitating gesture excepted, the strictest scrutiny, or the keenest suspicion, could have detected no signs of feeling. The senseless form before him was not less moved than he appeared to be, so far as the human eye could penetrate. Wyandotté was unmoved. He believed that, in curing the sores on his own back in this particular manner, he had done what became a Tuscarora warrior and a chief. Let not the self-styled Christians of civilized society affect horror at this instance of savage justice, so long as they go the whole length of the law of their several communities, in avenging their own fancied wrongs, using the dagger of calumny instead of the scalping-knife, and rending and tearing their victims, by the agency of gold and power, like so many beasts of the field, in all forms and modes that legal vindictiveness

will either justify or tolerate; often exceeding those broad limits, indeed, and seeking impunity behind perjuries and frauds.

Nick's examination of the body was neither hurried nor agitated. When it was over, he turned calmly to consider the daughters of the deceased.

"Why you cry — why you 'fear'd?" he said, approaching Beulah, and placing his swarthy hand on the head of her sleeping infant. "Good squaw — good pappoose. Wyandotté take care 'em in woods. By'm-by go to pale-face town, and sleep quiet."

This was rudely said, but it was well meant. Beulah so received it; and she endeavored to smile her gratitude in the face of the very being from whom, more than from all of earth, she would have turned in horror, could her mental vision have reached the fearful secret that lay buried in his own bosom. The Indian understood her look; and making a gesture of encouragement, he moved to the side of the woman whom his own hand had made a widow.

The appearance of Wyandotté produced no change in the look or manner of the matron. The Indian took her hand, and spoke.

"Squaw berry good," he said, with emphasis. "Why look so sorry — cap'in gone to happy huntin'-ground of his people. All good dere — chief time come, must go."

The widow knew the voice, and by some secret association it recalled the scenes of the past, producing a momentary revival of her faculties.

"Nick, you are my friend," she said, earnestly. "Go speak to him, and see if you can wake him up."

Tne Indian fairly started, as he heard this strange proposal. The weakness lasted only for a moment, however, and he became as stoical, in appearance at least, as before.

"No," he said; "squaw quit cap'in, now. Warrior go on last path all alone — no want companion. She look at grave, now and den, and be happy."

"Happy!" echoed the widow, "what is that, Nick?

what is happy, my son? It seems a dream — I must have known what it was; but I forget it all now. Oh! it was cruel, cruel, cruel, cruel, to stab a husband, and a father — wasn't it, Robert? What say you, Nick — shall I give you more medicine? You'll die, Indian, unless you take it — mind what a Christian woman tells you, and be obedient. Here, let me hold the cup; there — now you'll live!"

Nick recoiled an entire step, and gazed at the still beautiful victim of his ruthless revenge, in a manner no one had ever before noted in his mien. His mixed habits left him in ignorance of no shade of the fearful picture before his eyes, and he began better to comprehend the effects of the blow he had so hastily struck — a blow meditated for years, though given at length under a sudden and vehement impulse. The widowed mother, however, was past noting these changes.

"No, no, no, Nick," she added, hurriedly, scarce speaking above a whisper, "do not awake him! God will do that when He summons his blessed ones to the foot of his throne. Let us all lie down and sleep with him. Robert, do you lie there, at his side, my noble, noble boy; Beulah, place little Evert and yourself at the other side; Maud, your place is by the head; I will sleep at his feet; while Nick shall watch, and let us know when it will be time to rise and pray" —

The general and intense, almost spell-bound, attention with which all in the room listened to these gentle but touching wanderings of a mind so single and pure, was interrupted by yells so infernal, and shrieks so wild and fearful, that it seemed, in sooth, as if the last trump had sounded, and men were passing forth from their graves to judgment. Willoughby almost leaped out of the room, and Maud followed, to shut and bolt the door, when her waist was encircled by the arm of Nick, and she found herself borne forward towards the din.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Oh, Time and Death! with certain pace
Though still unequal, hurrying on,
O'erturning, in your awful race,
The cot, the palace, and the throne!

SANDS.

MAUD had little leisure for reflection. The yells and shrieks were followed by the cries of combatants, and the crack of the rifle. Nick hurried her along at a rate so rapid that she had not breath to question or remonstrate, until she found herself at the door of a small store-room, in which her mother was accustomed to keep articles of domestic economy that required but little space. Into this room Nick thrust her, and then she heard the key turn on her egress. For a single moment, Wyandotté stood hesitating whether he should endeavor to get Mrs. Willoughby and her other daughter into the same place of security; then, judging of the futility of the attempt, by the approach of the sounds within, among which he heard the full, manly voice of Robert Willoughby, calling on the garrison to be firm, he raised an answering yell to those of the Mohawks, the war-whoop of his tribe, and plunged into the fray with the desperation of one who ran a muck, and with the delight of a demon.

In order to understand the cause of this sudden change, it will be necessary to return a little, in the order of time. While Willoughby was with his mother and sisters, Mike had charge of the gate. The rest of the garrison was either at the loops, or was stationed on the roofs. As the darkness increased, Joel mustered sufficient courage to crawl through the hole, and actually reached the gate. Without him, it was found impossible to spring his mine, and he had been prevailed on to risk this much on condi-

tion it should not be asked of him to do such violence to his feelings as to enter the court of a house in which he had seen so many happy days.

The arrangement, by which this traitor intended to throw a family upon the tender mercies of savages, was exceedingly simple. It will be remembered that only one leaf of the inner gate was hung, the other being put in its place, where it was sustained by a prop. This prop consisted of a single piece of timber, of which one end rested on the ground, and the other on the centre of the gate; the last being effectually prevented from slipping by pins of wood, driven into the massive wood-work of the gate, above its end. The lower end of the prop rested against a fragment of rock that nature had placed at this particular spot. As the work had been set up in a hurry, it was found necessary to place wedges between the lower end of the prop and the rock, in order to force the leaf properly into its groove, without which it might have been canted to one side, and of course easily overturned by the exercise of sufficient force from without.

To all this arrangement Joel had been a party, and he knew, as a matter of course, its strong and its weak points. Seizing a favorable moment, he had loosened the wedges, leaving them in their places, however, but using the precaution to fasten a bit of small but strong cord to the most material one of the three, which cord he buried in the dirt, and led half round a stick driven into the earth, quite near the wall, and thence through a hole made by one of the hinges, to the outer side of the leaf. The whole had been done with so much care as to escape the vigilance of casual observers, and expressly that the overseer might assist his friends in entering the place, after he himself had provided for his own safety by flight. The circumstance that no one trod on the side of the gateway where the unhung leaf stood, prevented the half-buried cord from being disturbed by any casual footstep.

As soon as Joel reached the wall of the Hut, his first care was to ascertain if he were safe from missiles from the loops. Assured of this fact, he stole round to the gate, and

had a consultation with the Mohawk chief on the subject of springing the mine. The cord was found in its place; and, hauling on it gently, Joel was soon certain that he had removed the wedge, and that force might speedily throw down the unhung leaf. Still he proceeded with caution. Applying the point of a lever to the bottom of the leaf, he hove it back sufficiently to be sure it would pass inside of its fellow; and then he announced to the grave warrior, who had watched the whole proceeding, that the time was come to lend his aid.

There were a dozen reckless whites in the cluster of savages collected at the gate, and enough of these were placed at handspikes to effect the intended dislodgment. The plan was this: while poles were set against the upper portion of the leaf, to force it within the line of the suspended part, handspikes and crowbars, of which a sufficiency had been provided by Joel's forethought, were to be applied between the hinge edge and the wall, to cast the whole over to the other side.

Unluckily, Mike had been left at the gate as the sentinel. A more unfortunate selection could not have been made; the true-hearted fellow having so much self-confidence, and so little forethought, as to believe the gates impregnable. He had lighted a pipe, and was smoking as tranquilly as he had ever done before, in his daily indulgences of this character, when the unhung leaf came tumbling in upon the side where he sat, nothing saving his head but the upper edge's lodging against the wall. At the same moment, a dozen Indians leaped through the opening, and sprang into the court, raising the yells already described. Mike followed, armed with his shillelah, for his musket was abandoned in the surprise, and he began to lay about him with an earnestness that in nowise lessened the clamor. This was the moment when Joyce, nobly sustained by Blodget and Jamie Allen, poured a volley into the court from the roofs, when the fray became general. To this point had the combat reached, when Willoughby rushed into the open air, followed, a few instants later, by Nick.

The scene that succeeded is not easily described. It was

a *mêlée* in the dark, illuminated at instants by the flashes of guns, and rendered horrible by shrieks, curses, groans, and whoops. Mike actually cleared the centre of the court, where he was soon joined by Willoughby, when, together, they made a rush at a door, and actually succeeded in gaining their own party on the roof. It was not in nature for the young soldier to remain here, however, while his mother, Beulah, and, so far as he knew, Maud lay exposed to the savages below. Amid a shower of bullets he collected his whole force, and was on the point of charging into the court, when the roll of a drum without brought everything to a stand. Young Blodget, who had displayed the ardor of a hero and the coolness of a veteran throughout the short fray, sprang down the stairs unarmed at this sound, passed through the astonished crowd in the court, unnoticed, and rushed to the outer gate. He had barely time to unbar it, when a body of troops marched through, led by a tall, manly-looking chief, who was accompanied by one that the young man instantly recognized, in spite of the darkness, for Mr. Woods, in his surplice. At the next moment, the strangers had entered, with military steadiness, into the court, to the number of at least fifty, ranging themselves in order across its area.

"In the name of Heaven, who are you?" called out Willoughby, from a window. "Speak at once, or we fire."

"I am Colonel Beekman, at the head of a regular force," was the answer, "and if, as I suspect, you are Major Willoughby, you know that you are safe. In the name of Congress I command all good citizens to keep the peace or they will meet with punishment for their contumacy."

This announcement ended the war, Beekman and Willoughby grasping each other's hands fervently, at the next instant.

"Oh! Beekman!" exclaimed the last, "at what a moment has God sent you hither? Heaven be praised! notwithstanding all that has happened, you will find your wife and child safe. Place sentinels at both gates; for treachery has been at work here, and I shall ask for rigid justice."

"Softly — softly, my good fellow," answered Beekman,

pressing his hand. "Your own position is a little delicate, and we must proceed with moderation. I learned, just in time, that a party was coming hither, bent on mischief; and obtaining the necessary authority, I hastened to the nearest garrison, obtained a company, and commenced my march as soon as possible. Had we not met with Mr. Woods travelling for the settlements in quest of succor, we might have been too late. As it was, God be praised! I think we have arrived in season."

Such were the facts. The Indians had repelled the zealous chaplain as a madman; compelling him to take the route towards the settlements, however; their respect for this unfortunate class of beings rendering them averse to his rejoining their enemies. He could, and did impart enough to Beekman to quicken his march, and to bring him and his followers up to the gate at a time when a minute might have cost the entire garrison their lives.

Anxious as he was to seek Beulah and his child, Beekman had a soldier's duties to perform, and those he would not neglect. The sentinels were posted, and orders issued to light lanterns, and to make a fire in the centre of the court, so that the actual condition of the field of battle might be ascertained. A surgeon had accompanied Beekman's party, and he was already at work, so far as the darkness would allow. Many hands being employed, and combustibles easy to be found, ere long the desired light was gleaming on the terrible spectacle.

A dozen bodies were stretched in the court, of which three or four were fated never to rise again, in life. Of the rest no less than four had fallen with broken heads, inflicted by O'Hearn's shillelah. Though these blows were not fatal, they effectually put the warriors *hors de combat*. Of the garrison, not one was among the slain, in this part of the field. On a later investigation, however, it was ascertained that the poor old Scotch mason had received a mortal hurt through a window, and this by the very last shot that had been fired. On turning over the dead of the assailants, too, it was discovered that Daniel the miller, was of the number. A few of the Mohawks

were seen with glowing eyes in corners of the court, applying their own rude dressings to their various hurts; succeeding, on the whole, in effecting the great purpose of the healing art, about as well as those who were committed to the lights of science.

Surprising few uninjured members of the assaulting party, however, were to be found when the lanterns appeared. Some had slipped through the gate before the sentinels were posted; others had found their way to the roof, and thence, by various means, to the ground; while a few lay concealed in the buildings until a favorable moment offered to escape. Among all those who remained, not an individual was found who claimed to be in any authority. In a word, after five minutes of examination, both Beekman and Willoughby were satisfied that there no longer existed a force to dispute with them the mastery of the Hut.

"We have delayed too long relieving the apprehensions of those who are very dear to us, Major Willoughby," Beekman at length observed. "If you will lead the way to the parts of the buildings where your — my mother and wife are to be found, I will now follow you."

"Hold, Beekman — there yet remains a melancholy tale to be told — nay, start not — I left our Beulah and your boy in perfect health less than a quarter of an hour since. But my honored, honorable, revered, beloved father has been killed in a most extraordinary manner, and you will find his widow and daughters weeping over his body."

This appalling intelligence produced a halt, during which Willoughby explained all he knew of the manner of his father's death, which was merely the little he had been enabled to glean from Maud. As soon as this duty was performed, the gentlemen proceeded together to the apartment of the mourners, each carrying a light.

Willoughby made an involutary exclamation, when he perceived that the door of his mother's room was open. He had hoped Maud would have had the presence of mind

to close and lock it; but here he found it, yawning as if to invite the entrance of enemies. The light within, too, was extinguished, though by the aid of the lanterns he saw large traces of blood in the ante-room, and the passages he was obliged to tread. All this hastened his steps. Presently he stood in the chamber of death.

Short as had been the struggle, the thirst for scalps had led some of the savages to this sanctuary. The instant the Indians had gained the court, some of the most ferocious of their number had rushed into the building, penetrating its recesses in a way to defile them with slaughter. The first object that Willoughby saw was one of these ruthless warriors stretched on the floor, with a living Indian, bleeding at half a dozen wounds, standing over him; the eye-balls of the latter were glaring like the tiger's that is suddenly confronted to a foe. An involuntary motion was made towards the rifle he carried by the major; but the next look told him that the living Indian was Nick. Then it was that he gazed more steadily about him, and took in all the horrible truths of that fatal chamber.

Mrs. Willoughby was seated in the chair where she had last been seen, perfectly dead. No mark of violence was ever found on her body, however, and there is no doubt that her constant spirit had followed that of her husband to the other world, in submission to the blow which had separated them. Beulah had been shot; not, as was afterwards ascertained, by any intentional aim, but by one of those random bullets, of which so many had been flying through the buildings. The missile had passed through her heart, and she lay pressing the little Evert to her bosom, with that air of steady and unerring affection which had marked every act of her innocent and feeling life. The boy himself, thanks to the tiger-like gallantry of Nick, had escaped unhurt. The Tuscarora had seen a party of six take the direction of this chamber, and he followed with an instinct of their intentions. When the leader entered the room and found three dead bodies, he raised a yell that betokened his delight at the prospect of gaining

so many scalps ; at the next instant, while his fingers were actually entwined in the hair of Captain Willoughby, he fell from a blow from Wyandotté. Nick next extinguished the lamp, and then succeeded a scene which none of the actors themselves could have described. Another Mohawk fell, and the remainder, after suffering horribly from the keen knife of Nick, as well as from blows received from each other, dragged themselves away, leaving the field to the Tuscarora. The latter met the almost bewildered gaze of the major with a smile of grim triumph, as he pointed to the three bodies of the beloved ones, and said, —

"See — all got scalp ! Deat', nothin'— scalp, ebberyt'ing."

We shall not attempt to describe the outbreaking of anguish from the husband and brother. It was a moment of wild grief, that bore down all the usual restraints of manhood, though it was such a moment as an American frontier residence has often witnessed. The quiet but deep-feeling nature of Beekman received a shock that almost produced a dissolution of his earthly being. He succeeded, however, in raising the still warm body of Beulah from the floor, and folding it to his heart. Happily for his reason, a flood of tears, such as women shed, burst from his soul rather than from his eyes, bedewing her still sweet and placid countenance.

To say that Robert Willoughby did not feel the desolation, which so suddenly alighted on a family that had often been quoted for its mutual affection and happiness, would be to do him great injustice. He even staggered under the blow, yet his heart craved further information. The Indian was gazing intently on the sight of Beekman's grief, partly in wonder, but more in sympathy, when he felt an iron pressure of his arm.

"Maud ! Tuscarora," the major rather groaned than whispered in his ear ; "know you anything of Maud ?"

Nick made a gesture of assent, then motioned for the other to follow. He led the way to the store-room, produced the key, and throwing open the door, Maud was

weeping on Robert Willoughby's bosom in another instant. He would not take her to the chamber of death, but urged her, by gentle violence, to follow him to the library.

"God be praised for this mercy!" exclaimed the ardent girl, raising her hands and streaming eyes to heaven. "I know not, care not, who is conqueror, since you are safe!"

"Oh! Maud — beloved one — we must now be all in all to each other. Death has stricken the others."

This was a sudden and involuntary announcement, though it was best it should be so under the circumstances. It was long before Maud could hear an outline, even, of the details, but she bore them better than Willoughby could have hoped. The excitement had been so high as to brace the mind to meet any human evil. The sorrow that came afterwards, though sweetened by so many tender recollections and chastened hopes, was deep and enduring.

Our picture would not have been complete, without relating the catastrophe that befell the Hutted Knoll; but, having discharged this painful duty, we prefer to draw a veil over the remainder of that dreadful night. The cries of the negresses, when they learned the death of their old and young mistress, disturbed the silence of the place for a few minutes, and then a profound stillness settled on the buildings, marking them distinctly as the house of mourning. On further inquiry, too, it was ascertained that Great Smash, after shooting an Oneida, had been slain and scalped. Pliny the younger, also, fell fighting like a wild beast to defend the entrance to his mistresses' apartments.

The following day, when light had returned, a more accurate idea was obtained of the real state of the valley. All of the invading party, the dead and wounded excepted, had made a rapid retreat, accompanied by most of the deserters and their families. The name, known influence, and actual authority of Colonel Beekman had wrought this change; the irregular powers that had set the expedition

in motion preferring to conceal their agency in the transaction, rather than make any hazardous attempt to claim the reward of patriotic service, as is so often done in revolutions, for merciless deeds and selfish acts. There had been no real design on the part of the whites to injure any of the family in their persons; but, instigated by Joel, they had fancied the occasion favorable for illustrating their own public virtue, while they placed themselves in the way of receiving fortune's favors. The assault, that actually occurred, was one of those uncontrollable outbreakings of Indian ferocity that have so often set at defiance the restraints of discipline.

Nick was not to be found either. He had been last seen dressing his wounds, with Indian patience and Indian skill, preparing to apply herbs and roots, in quest of which he went into the forest about midnight. As he did not return, Willoughby feared that he might be suffering alone, and determined to have a search made as soon as he had performed the last sad offices for the dead.

Two days occurred, however, before this melancholy duty was discharged. The bodies of all the savages who had fallen were interred the morning after the assault; but that of Jamie Allen, and those of the principal persons of the family, were kept for the pious purposes of affection, until the time mentioned.

The funeral was a touching sight. The captain, his wife, and daughter were laid, side by side, near the chapel; the first and last of their race that ever reposed in the wilds of America. Mr. Woods read the funeral service, summoning all his spiritual powers to sustain him, as he discharged this solemn office of the Church. Willoughby's arm was around the waist of Maud, who endeavored to reward his tender assiduities by a smile, but could not. Colonel Beekman held little Evert in his arms, and stood over the grave with the countenance of a resolute man stricken with grief — one of the most touching spectacles of our nature.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord," sounded in the stillness of that valley like a voice from

heaven, pouring out consolation on the bruised spirits of the mourners. Maud raised her face from Willoughby's shoulder, and lifted her blue eyes to the cloudless vault above her, soliciting mercy, and offering resignation in the look. The line of troops in the background moved, as by a common impulse, and then a breathless silence showed the desire of these rude beings not to lose a syllable.

A round red spot formed on each of the cheeks of Mr. Woods as he proceeded, and his voice gathered strength, until its lowest intonations came clear and distinct on every ear. Just as the bodies were about to be lowered into their two receptacles, the captain, his wife, and daughter being laid in the same grave, Nick came with his noiseless step near the little group of mourners. He had issued from the forest only a few minutes before, and understanding the intention of the ceremony, he approached the spot as fast as weakness and wounds would allow. Even he listened with profound attention to the chaplain, never changing his eye from his face, unless to glance at the coffins as they lay in their final resting-place.

"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, From henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors," continued the chaplain, his voice beginning to betray a tremor; then the gaze of the Tuscarora became keen as the panther's glance at his discovered victim. Tears followed, and, for a moment, the voice was choked.

"Why you woman?" demanded Nick, fiercely. "Save all 'e scalp!"

This strange interruption failed to produce any effect First Beekman yielded; Maud and Willoughby followed; until Mr. Woods himself, unable to resist the double assaults of the power of sympathy and his own affection, closed the book and wept like a child.

It required minutes for the mourners to recover their self-command. When the latter returned, however, all knelt on the grass, the line of soldiers included, and the closing prayers were raised to the throne of God.

This act of devotion enabled the mourners to maintain

an appearance of greater tranquillity until the graves were filled. The troops advanced, and fired three volleys over the captain's grave, when all retired towards the Hut. Maud had caught little Evert from the arms of his father, and pressing him to her bosom, the motherless babe seemed disposed to slumber there. In this manner she walked away, attended closely by the father, who now cherished his boy as an only treasure.

Willoughby lingered the last at the grave, Nick alone remaining near him. The Indian had been struck by the exhibition of deep sorrow that he had witnessed, and he felt an uneasiness that was a little unaccountable to himself. It was one of the caprices of this strange nature of ours, that he should feel a desire to console those whom he had so deeply injured himself. He drew near to Robert Willoughby, therefore, and, laying a hand on the latter's arm, drew his look in the direction of his own red and speaking face.

"Why so sorry, major?" he said. "Warrior nebber die but once — must die some time."

"There lie my father, my mother, and my only sister, Indian; is not that enough to make the stoutest heart bend? You knew them, too, Nick — did you ever know better?"

"Squaw good — both squaw good — Nick see no pale-face squaw he like so much."

"I thank you, Nick! This rude tribute to the virtues of my mother and sister, is far more grateful to me than the calculating and regulated condolence of the world."

"No squaw so good as ole one — she, all heart — love everybody but self."

This was so characteristic of his mother, that Willoughby was startled by the sagacity of the savage, though reflection told him so long an acquaintance with the family must have made a dog familiar with this beautiful trait in his mother.

"And my father, Nick!" exclaimed the major with feeling, "my noble, just, liberal, gallant father! He, too, you knew well, and must have loved."

"No so good as squaw," answered the Tuscarora, sententiously, and not altogether without disgust in his manner.

"We are seldom as good as our wives, and mothers, and sisters, Nick, else should we be angels on earth. But, allowing for the infirmities of us men, my father was just and good."

"Too much flog," answered the savage, sternly; "make Injin's back sore."

This extraordinary speech struck the major less, at the time, than it did years afterwards, when he came to reflect on all the events and dialogues of this teeming week. Such was also the case as to what followed.

"You are no flatterer, Tuscarora, as I have always found in our intercourse. If my father ever punished you with severity, you will allow me, at least, to imagine it was merited."

"Too much flog, I say," interrupted the savage, fiercely. "No difference, chief or not. Touch ole sore too rough. Good, some; bad, some. Like weather — now shine, now storm."

"This is no time to discuss these points, Nick. You have fought nobly for us, and I thank you. Without your aid, these beloved ones would have been mutilated, as well as slain; and Maud — my own blessed Maud — might now have been sleeping at their sides."

Nick's face was now all softness again, and he returned the pressure of Willoughby's hand with honest fervor. Here they separated. The major hastened to the side of Maud, to fold her to his heart, and console her with his love. Nick passed into the forest, returning no more to the Hut. His path led him near the grave. On the side where lay the body of Mrs. Willoughby, he threw a flower he had plucked in the meadow; while he shook his finger menacingly at the other, which hid the person of his enemy. In this, he was true to his nature, which taught him never to forget a favor, or forgive an injury.

CHAPTER XXX.

I shall go on through all eternity;
Thank God, I only am an embryo still:
The small beginning of a glorious soul.
An atom that shall fill immensity.

COXE.

A FORTNIGHT elapsed ere Willoughby and his party could tear themselves from a scene that had witnessed so much domestic happiness; but on which had fallen the blight of death. During that time, the future arrangements of the survivors were completed. Beekman was made acquainted with the state of feeling that existed between his brother-in-law and Maud, and he advised an immediate union.

"Be happy while you can," he said, with bitter emphasis. "We live in troubled times, and Heaven knows when we shall see better. Maud has not a blood-relation in all America, unless there may happen to be some in the British army. Though we should all be happy to protect and cherish the dear girl, she herself would probably prefer to be near those whom nature has appointed her friends. To me, she will always seem a sister, as you must ever be a brother. By uniting yourselves at once, all appearances of impropriety will be avoided; and in time, God averting evil, you can introduce your wife to her English connections."

"You forget, Beekman, that you are giving this advice to one who is a prisoner on parole, and one who may possibly be treated as a spy."

"No — that is impossible. Schuyler, our noble commander, is both just and a gentleman. He will tolerate nothing of the sort. Your exchange can easily be effected, and, beyond your present difficulties, I can pledge myself to be able to protect you."

Willoughby was not averse to following this advice; and he urged it upon Maud, as the safest and most prudent course they could pursue. Our heroine, however, was so reluctant even to assuming the appearance of happiness, so recently after the losses she had experienced, that the lover's task of persuasion was by no means easy. Maud was totally free from affectation, while she possessed the keenest sense of womanly propriety. Her intercourse with Robert Willoughby had been of the tenderest and most confidential nature, above every pretense of concealment, and was rendered sacred by the scenes through which they had passed. Her love, her passionate, engrossing attachment, she did not scruple to avow; but she could not become a bride while the stains of blood seemed so recent on the very hearth around which they were sitting. She still saw the forms of the dead, in their customary places, heard their laughs, the tones of their affectionate voices, the maternal whisper, the playful, paternal reproof, or Beulah's gentle call.

"Yet, Robert," said Maud, for she could now call him by that name, and drop the desperate familiarity of "Bob," — "yet, Robert, there would be a melancholy satisfaction in making our vows at the altar of the little chapel, where we have so often worshipped together — the loved ones who are gone and we who alone remain."

"True, dearest Maud; and there is another reason why we should quit this place only as man and wife. Beekman has owned that a question will probably be raised among the authorities at Albany concerning the nature of my visit here. It might relieve him from an appeal to more influence than would be altogether pleasant, did I appear as a bridegroom rather than as a spy."

The word "spy" settled the matter. All ordinary considerations were lost sight of, under the apprehensions it created, and Maud frankly consented to become a wife that very day. The ceremony was performed by Mr. Woods accordingly, and the little chapel witnessed tears of bitter recollections mingling with the smiles with which the bride received the warm embrace of her husband, after the bene-

diction was pronounced. Still, all felt that, under the circumstances, delay would have been unwise. Maud saw a species of holy solemnity in a ceremony so closely connected with scenes so sad.

A day or two after the marriage, all that remained of those who had so lately crowded the Hut, left the valley together. The valuables were packed and transported to boats lying in the stream below the mills. All the cattle, hogs, etc., were collected and driven towards the settlements; and horses were prepared for Maud and the females, who were to thread the path that led to Fort Stanwix. In a word, the Knoll was to be abandoned, as a spot unfit to be occupied in such a war. None but laborers, indeed, could or would remain, and Beekman thought it wisest to leave the spot entirely to nature, for the few succeeding years.

There had been some rumors of confiscations by the new State, and Willoughby had come to the conclusion that it would be safer to transfer this property to one who would be certain to escape such an infliction, than to retain it in his own hands. Little Evert was entitled to receive a portion of the captain's estate by justice, if not by law. No will had been found, and the son succeeded as heir-at-law. A deed was accordingly drawn up by Mr. Woods, who understood such matters, and being duly executed, the Beaver Dam property was vested in fee in the child. His own thirty thousand pounds, the personals he inherited from his mother, and Maud's fortune, to say nothing of the major's commission, formed an ample support for the new-married pair. When all was settled and made productive, indeed, Willoughby found himself the master of between three and four thousand sterling a year, exclusively of his allowances from the British government, an ample fortune for that day. In looking over the accounts of Maud's fortune, he had reason to admire the rigid justice and free-handed liberality with which his father had managed her affairs. Every farthing of her income had been transferred to capital, a long minority nearly doubling the original investment. Unknown to himself, he had married one of the richest heir-

esses then to be found in the American colonies. This was unknown to Maud, also; though it gave her great delight on her husband's account, when she came to learn the truth.

Albany was reached in due time, though not without encountering the usual difficulties. Here the party separated. The remaining Plinies and Smashes were all liberated, handsome provisions made for their little wants, and good places found for them, in the connection of the family to which they had originally belonged. Mike announced his determination to enter a corps that was intended expressly to fight the Indians. He had a long score to settle, and having no wife or children, he thought he might amuse himself in this way, during a revolution, as well as in any other.

"If yer honor was going anywhere near the county Leitrim," he said, in answer to Willoughby's offer to keep him near himself, "I might travel in company; seein' that a man likes to look on ould faces, now and then. Many thanks for this bag of gould, which will sarve to buy scalps wid; for divil bur-r-n me, if I don't carry on *that* trade, for some time to come. T'ree cuts wid a knife, half a dozen pokes in the side, and a bullet scraping the head, makes a man mindful of what has happened; to say nothing of the captain, and Madam Willoughby, and Miss Beuly — God forever bless and presarve 'em all t'ree — and, if there was such a thing as a bit of a church in this counthry, wouldn't I use this gould for masses? — that I would, and let the scalps go to the divil!"

This was an epitome of the views of Michael O'Hearn. No arguments of Willoughby's could change his resolution; but he set forth, determined to illustrate his career by procuring as many Indian scalps, as an atonement for the wrongs done "Madam Willoughby and Miss Beuly," as came within his reach.

"And you, Joyce," said the major, in an interview he had with the sergeant, shortly after reaching Albany; "I trust we are not to part. Thanks to Colonel Beekman's influence and zeal, I am already exchanged, and shall repair

to New York next week. You are a soldier; and these are times in which a good soldier is of some account. I think I can safely promise you a commission in one of the new provincial regiments about to be raised."

"I thank your honor, but do not feel at liberty to accept the offer. I took service with Captain Willoughby for life; had he lived, I would have followed wherever he led. But that enlistment has expired; and I am now like a recruit before he takes the bounty. In such cases a man has always a right to pick his corps. Politics I do not much understand; but when the question comes up of pulling a trigger for or against his country, an unengaged man has a right to choose. Between the two, meaning no reproach to yourself, Major Willoughby, who had regularly taken service with the other side, before the war began — but, between the two, I would rather fight an Englishman than an American."

"You may possibly be right, Joyce; though, as you say, my service is taken. I hope you follow the dictates of conscience, as I am certain I do myself. We shall never meet in arms, however, if I can prevent it. There is a negotiation for a lieutenant-colonelcy going on, which, if it succeed, will carry me to England. I shall never serve an hour longer against these colonies, if it be in my power to avoid it."

"States, with your permission, Major Willoughby," answered the sergeant, a little stiffly. "I am glad to hear it, sir; for, though I wish my enemies good soldiers, I would rather not have the son of my old captain among them. Colonel Beekman has offered to make me sergeant-major of his own regiment; and we both of us join next week."

Joyce was as good as his word. He became sergeant-major, and, in the end, lieutenant and adjutant of the regiment he had mentioned. He fought in most of the principal battles of the war, and retired at the peace, with an excellent character. Ten years later, he fell, in one of the murderous Indian affairs that occurred during the first presidential term, a gray-headed captain of foot. The manner

of his death was not to be regretted, perhaps, as it was what he had always wished might happen; but it was a singular fact, that Mike stood over his body, and protected it from mutilation; the county Leitrim-man having turned soldier by trade, reënlisting regularly, as soon as at liberty, and laying up scalps on all suitable occasions.

Blodget too, had followed Joyce to the wars. The readiness and intelligence of this young man, united to a courage of proof, soon brought him forward, and he actually came out of the revolution a captain. His mind, manners, and information advancing with himself, he ended his career, not many years since, a prominent politician in one of the new States; a general in the militia — no great preferment, by the way, for one who had been a corporal at the Hut — and a legislator. Worse men have often acted in all these capacities among us; and it was said, with truth, at the funeral of General Blodget, an accident that does not always occur on such occasions, that "Another revolutionary hero is gone." Beekman was never seen to smile, from the moment he first beheld the dead body of Beulah, lying with little Evert in her arms. He served faithfully until near the close of the war, falling in battle only a few months previously to the peace. His boy preceded him to the grave, leaving, as confiscations had gone out of fashion by that time, his uncle heir-at-law, again, to the same property that he had conferred on himself.

As for Willoughby and Maud, they were safely conveyed to New York, where the former rejoined his regiment. Our heroine here met her great-uncle, General Meredith, the first of her own blood-relations whom she had seen since infancy. Her reception was grateful to her feelings; and, there being a resemblance in years, appearance, and manners, she transferred much of that affection which she had thought interred forever in the grave of her reputed father, to this revered relative. He became much attached to his lovely niece, himself; and, ten years later, Willoughby found his income quite doubled, by his decease.

At the expiration of six months, the gazette that arrived

from England, announced the promotion of "Sir Robert Willoughby, Bart., late major in the ——th, to be lieutenant-colonel by purchase, in his Majesty's ——th regiment of foot." This enabled Willoughby to quit America; to which quarter of the world he had no occasion to be sent during the remainder of the war.

Of that war, itself, there is little occasion to speak. Its progress and termination have long been matters of history. The independence of America was acknowledged by England in 1783; and, immediately after, the republicans commenced the conquest of their wide-spread domains, by means of the arts of peace. In 1785, the first great assaults were made on the wilderness, in that mountainous region which has been the principal scene of our tale. The Indians had been driven off, in a great measure, by the events of the Revolution; and the owners of estates, granted under the crown, began to search for their lands in the untenanted woods. Such isolated families, too, as had taken refuge in the settlements, now began to return to their deserted possessions; and soon the smokes of clearings were obscuring the sun. Whitestown, Utica, on the site of old Fort Stanwix, Cooperstown, for years the seat of justice for several thousand square miles of territory, all sprang into existence between the years 1785 and 1790. Such places as Oxford, Binghamton, Norwich, Sherburne, Hamilton, and twenty more, that now dot the region of which we have been writing, did not then exist, even in name; for in that day the appellation and maps came after the place; whereas, now, the former precede the last.

The ten years that elapsed between 1785 and 1795 did wonders for all this mountain district. More favorable lands lay spread in the great West, but the want of roads and remoteness from the markets prevented their occupation. For several years, therefore, the current of emigration which started out of the Eastern States, the instant peace was proclaimed, poured its tide into the counties mentioned in our opening chapter — counties as they are to-day; county, aye, and fragment of a county, too, as they were then.

The "New York Gazette," a journal that frequentl related facts that actually occurred, announced in its num ber of June 11th, 1795, "His Majesty's Packet that h just arrived" — it required half a century to teach th journalists of this country the propriety of saying "H Britannic Majesty's Packet," instead of "His Majesty's, a bit of good taste, and of good sense, that many of ther have yet to learn — "has brought out," home would hav been better, "among her passengers, Lieutenant-Genera Sir Robert Willoughby, and his lady, both of whom ar natives of this State. We welcome them back to thei land of nativity, where we can assure them they will b cordially received, notwithstanding old quarrels. Majo Willoughby's kindness to American prisoners is gratefull remembered; nor is it forgotten that he desired to exchang to another regiment in order to avoid further service in thi country."

It will be conceded, this was a very respectable puff fo the year 1795, when something like moderation, truth, an propriety was observed upon such occasions. The effec was to bring the English general's name into the mouths o the whole State; a baronet causing a greater sensation then in America, than a duke would produce to-day. It had th effect, however, of bringing around General Willoughb many of his father's and his own old friends, and he was a well received in New York twelve years after the termina tion of the conflict, as if he had fought on the other side The occurrence of the French Revolution, and the spread o doctrines that were termed jacobinical, early removed al the dissensions between a large portion of the whigs o America and the tories of England, on this side of th water at least; and Providence only can tell what migh have been the consequences, had this feeling been thor oughly understood on the other.

Passing over all political questions, however, our narra tive calls us to the relation of its closing scene. The visi of Sir Robert and Lady Willoughby to the land of thei birth was, in part, owing to feeling; in part, to a prope regard for the future provision of their children. The bar

onet had bought the ancient paternal estate of his family in England, and having two daughters, besides an only son, it occurred to him that the American property, called the Hutted Knoll, might prove a timely addition to the ready money he had been able to lay up from his income. Then, both he and his wife had a deep desire to revisit those scenes where they had first learned to love each other, and which still held the remains of so many who were dear to them.

The cabin of a suitable sloop was therefore engaged, and the party, consisting of Sir Robert, his wife, a man and woman servant, and a sort of American courier engaged for the trip, embarked on the morning of the 25th of July. On the afternoon of the 30th, the sloop arrived in safety at Albany, where a carriage was hired to proceed the remainder of the way by land. The route by old Fort Stanwix, as Utica was still generally called, was taken. Our travellers reached it on the evening of the third day; the "Sands," which are now traversed in less than an hour, then occupying more than half of the first day. When at Fort Stanwix, a passable country road was found, by which the travellers journeyed until they reached a tavern that united many of the comforts of a coarse civilization with frontier simplicity. Here they were given to understand they had only a dozen miles to go, in order to reach the Knoll.

It was necessary to make the remainder of the journey on horseback. A large, untenanted estate lay between the highway and the valley, across which no public road had yet been made. Foot-paths, however, abounded, and the rivulet was found without any difficulty. It was, perhaps, fortunate for the privacy of the Knoll, that it lay in the line of no frequented route, and, squatters being rare in that day, Willoughby saw, the instant he struck the path that followed the sinuosities of the stream, that it had been seldom trodden in the interval of the nineteen years which had occurred since he had last seen it himself. The evidences of this fact increased as the stream was ascended, until the travellers reached the mill, when it was found

that the spirit of destruction, which so widely prevails in the loose state of society that exists in all new countries, had been at work. Every one of the buildings at the fall had been burnt; probably as much because it was in the power of some reckless wanderer to work mischief, as for any other reason. That the act was the result of some momentary impulse, was evident in the circumstance that the mischief went no further. Some of the machinery had been carried away, however, to be set up in other places, on a principle that is very widely extended through all border settlements, which considers the temporary disuse of property as its virtual abandonment.

It was a moment of pain and pleasure, strangely mingled, when Willoughby and Maud reached the rocks, and got a first view of the ancient Beaver Dam. All the buildings remained, surprisingly little altered to the eye by the lapse of years. The gates had been secured when they left the place, in 1776; and the Hut having no accessible external windows, that dwelling remained positively intact. It is true, quite half the palisades were rotted down; but the Hut itself had resisted the ravages of time. A fire had been kindled against its side, but the stone walls had opposed an obstacle to its ravages; and an attempt, by throwing a brand upon the roof, had failed of its object, the shingles not igniting. On examination, the lock of the inner gate was still secure. The key had been found, and, on its application, an entrance was obtained into the court.

What a moment was that, when Maud, fresh from the luxuries of an English home, entered this long and well remembered scene of her youth! Rank grasses were growing in the court, but they soon disappeared before the scythes that had been brought, in expectation of the circumstance. Then, all was clear for an examination of the house. The Hut was exactly in the condition in which it had been left, with the exception of a little, and a very little, dust collected by time.

Maud was still in the bloom of womanhood, feminine, beautiful, full of feeling, and as sincere as when she left

these woods, though her feelings were tempered a little by intercourse with the world. She went from room to room, hanging on Willoughby's arm, forbidding any to follow. All the common furniture had been left in the house, in expectation it would be inhabited again, ere many years; and this helped to preserve the identity. The library was almost entire; the bedrooms, the parlors, and even the painting-room, were found very much as they would have appeared after an absence of a few months. Tears flowed in streams down the cheeks of Lady Willoughby, as she went through room after room, and recalled to the mind of her husband the different events of which they had been the silent witnesses. Thus passed an hour or two of unutterable tenderness, blended with a species of holy sorrow. At the end of that time, the attendants, of whom many had been engaged, had taken possession of the offices, etc., and were bringing the Hut once more into a habitable condition. Soon, too, a report was brought that the mowers, who had been brought in anticipation of their services being wanted, had cut a broad swathe to the ruins of the chapel, and the graves of the family.

It was now near the setting of the sun, and the hour was favorable for the melancholy duty that remained. Forbidding any to follow, Willoughby proceeded with Maud to the graves. These had been dug within a little thicket of shrubs, planted by poor Jamie Allen, under Maud's own directions. She had then thought that the spot might one day be wanted. These bushes, lilacs, and syringas, had grown to a vast size, in that rich soil. They completely concealed the space within, an area of some fifty square feet, from the observation of those without. The grass had been cut over all, however, and an opening made by the mowers gave access to the graves. On reaching the opening, Willoughby started at hearing voices within the inclosure; he was about to reprove the intruders, when Maud pressed his arm, and whispered, —

"Listen, Willoughby — those voices sound strangely to my ears! We have heard them before."

"I tell ye, Nick — Ould Nicky, or Saucy Nick, or what

ever's yer name," said one within, in a strong Irish accent, "that Jamie, the mason that was, is forenent ye, at this minute, under that bit of sod — and it's his honor and missus, and Miss Beuly, that is buried here. Och! ye're a cr'ature, Nick; good at takin' scalps, but ye knows nothin' of graves; barrin' the quantity ye've helped to fill."

"Good!" answered the Indian. "Cap'in here; squaw here; da'ter here. Where son? — where t'other gal?"

"Here," answered Willoughby, leading Maud within the hedge. "I am Robert Willoughby, and this is Maud Meredith, my wife."

Mike fairly started; he even showed a disposition to seize a musket which lay on the grass. As for the Indian, a tree in the forest could not have stood less unmoved than he was at this unexpected interruption. Then all four stood in silent admiration, noting the changes which time had, more or less, wrought in all.

Willoughby was in the pride of manhood. He had served with distinction, and his countenance and frame both showed it, though neither had suffered more than was necessary to give him a high military air, and a look of robust vigor. As for Maud, with her graceful form fully developed by her riding-habit, her soft lineaments and polished expression, no one would have thought her more than thirty, which was ten years less than her real age. With Mike and Nick it was very different. Both had grown old, not only in fact, but in appearance. The Irishman was turned of sixty, and his hard, coarse-featured face, burnt as red as the sun in a fog, by exposure and Santa Cruz, was getting to be wrinkled and a little emaciated. Still, his frame was robust and powerful. His attire was none of the best, and it was to be seen at a glance that it was more than half military. In point of fact, the poor fellow had been refused a reënlistment in the army, on account of his infirmities and years, and America was not then a country to provide retreats for her veterans. Still, Mike had an ample pension for wounds, and could not be said to be in want. He had suffered in the same battle with Joyce, in whose company he had actually been Cor-

oral O'Hearn, though his gallant commander had not risen o fight again, as had been the case with the subordinate.

Wyandotté exhibited still greater changes. He had seen his threescore and ten years; and was fast falling into the "sere and yellow leaf." His hair was getting gray, and his frame, though still active and sinewy, would have yielded under the extraordinary marches he had once made. In dress, there was nothing to remark; his ordinary Indian attire being in as good condition as was usual for the man. Willoughby thought, however, that his eye was less wild than when he knew him before; and every symptom of intemperance had vanished, not only from his countenance, but his person.

From the moment Willoughby appeared a marked change came over the countenance of Nick. His dark eye, which still retained much of its brightness, turned in the direction of the neighboring chapel, and he seemed relieved when a rustling in the bushes announced a footstep. There had not been another word spoken when the lilacs were shoved aside, and Mr. Woods, a vigorous little man, in a green old age, entered the area. Willoughby had not seen the chaplain since they parted at Albany, and the greetings were as warm as they were unexpected.

"I have lived a sort of hermit's life, my dear Bob, since the death of your blessed parents," said the divine, clearing his eyes of tears, "now and then cheered by a precious letter from yourself and Maud — I call you both by the names I gave you both in baptism — and it was 'I, Maud, take thee, Robert,' when you stood before the altar in that little edifice — you will pardon me if I am too familiar with a general officer and his lady" —

"Familiar!" exclaimed both in a breath; and Maud's soft, white hand was extended towards the chaplain with reproachful earnestness — "we, who were made Christians by you, and who have so much reason to remember and love you always!"

"Well, well; I see you are Robert and Maud, still," dashing streaming tears from his eyes now. "Yes, I did bring you both into God's visible Church on earth, and you

were baptized by one who received his ordination from th Archbishop of Canterbury himself" — Maud smiled a littl archly — "and who has never forgotten his ordinatio vows, as he humbly trusts. But you are not the onl Christians I have made — I now rank Nicholas among th number" —

"Nick!" interrupted Sir Robert; "Wyandotté!" adde his wife, with a more delicate tact.

"I call him Nicholas, now, since he was christened by that name; there is no longer a Wyandotté, or a Saucy Nick. Major Willoughby, I have a secret to communicate — I beg pardon, Sir Robert; but you will excuse old habits — if you will walk this way."

Willoughby was apart with the chaplain a full half hour, during which time Maud wept over the graves, the rest standing by in respectful silence. As for Nick, a stone could scarcely have been more fixed than his attitude. Nevertheless his mien was rebuked, his eye downcast; even his bosom was singularly convulsed. He knew that the chaplain was communicating to Willoughby the manner in which he had slain his father. At length the gentlemen returned slowly towards the graves; the general agitated, frowning, and flushed. As for Mr. Woods, he was placid and full of hope. Willoughby had yielded to his expostulations and arguments a forgiveness, which came reluctantly, and perhaps as much for the want of a suitable object for retaliation, as from a sense of Christian duty.

"Nicholas," said the chaplain, "I have told the general all."

"He know him!" cried the Indian, with startling energy.

"I do, Wyandotté; and sorry have I been to learn it. You have made my heart bitter."

Nick was terribly agitated. His youthful and former opinions maintained a fearful struggle with those which had come late in life; the result being a wild admixture of his sense of Indian justice, and submission to the tenets of his new and imperfectly-comprehended faith. For a moment the first prevailed. Advancing with a firm step to the

general, he put his own bright and keen tomahawk into the other's hands, folded his arms on his bosom, bowed his head a little, and said, firmly, —

"Strike! Nick kill cap'in — major kill Nick."

"No, Tuscarora, no," answered Sir Robert Willoughby, his whole soul yielding to this act of humble submission; "may God in heaven forgive the deed, as I now forgive you."

There was a wild smile gleaming on the face of the Indian; he grasped both hands of Willoughby in his own. He then muttered the words, "God forgive," his eye rolled upwards at the clouds, and he fell dead on the grave of his victim. It was thought afterwards that agitation had accelerated the crisis of an incurable affection of the heart.

A few minutes of confusion followed. Then Mike, bareheaded, his old face flushed and angry, dragged from his pockets a string of strange-looking, hideous objects, and laid them by the Indian's side. They were human scalps, collected by himself in the course of many campaigns, and brought, as a species of hecatomb, to the graves of the fallen.

"Out upon ye, Nick!" he cried. "Had I known the like of that, little would I have campaigned in yer company. Och! 'twas an undacent deed, and a hundred confessions would barely wipe it from yer sowl. It's a pity, too, that ye've died widout absolution from a praist, such as I've tould ye off. Barrin' the brache of good fellyship, I could have placed yer own scalp wid the rest, as a p'ace-offering, to his honor, the missus, and Miss Beuly" —

"Enough," interrupted Sir Robert Willoughby, with an authority of manner that Mike's military habits could not resist; "the man has repented, and is forgiven. Maud, love, it is time to quit this melancholy scene; occasions will offer to revisit it."

In the end Mr. Woods took possession of the Hut as a sort of hermitage, in which to spend the remainder of his days. He had toiled hard for the conversion of Nick, in gratitude for the manner in which he had fought in defense of the females. He now felt as keen a desire to rescue the

Irishman from the superstitions of what he deemed an error quite as fatal as heathenism. Mike consented to pass the remainder of his days at the Knoll, which was to be, and in time was, renovated, under their joint care.

Sir Robert and Lady Willoughby passed a month in the valley. Nick had been buried within the bushes; and even Maud had come to look upon this strange conjunction of graves, with the eye of a Christian, blended with the tender regrets of a woman. The day that the general and his wife left the valley forever, they paid a final visit to the graves. Here Maud wept for an hour. Then her husband, passing an arm round her waist, drew her gently away; saying, as they were quitting the inclosure, —

"They are in heaven, dearest, looking down in love, quite likely, on us, the objects of so much of their earthly affection. As for Wyandotté, he lived according to his habits and intelligence, and happily died under the convictions of a conscience directed by the lights of divine grace. Little will the deeds of this life be remembered, among those who have been the true subjects of its blessed influence. If this man were unmerciful in his revenge, he also remembered my mother's kindnesses, and bled for her and her daughters. Without his care, my life would have remained unblessed with your love, my ever-precious Maud. He never forgot a favor, or forgave an injury."

THE END

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